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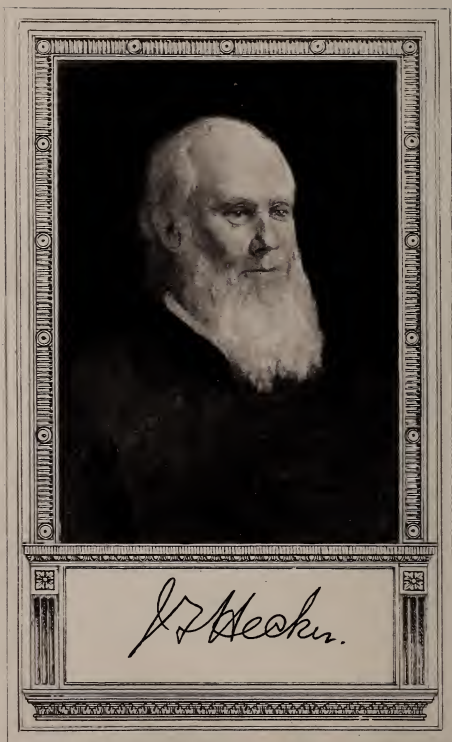
M. A. DeWOLFE HOWE

FATHER HECKER

BY

HENRY D. SEDGWICK, JR.





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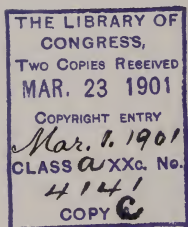
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*Press of
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The frontispiece to this volume is from a photograph loaned by Mrs. George V. Hecker of a painting by Father Hecker's niece, Mrs. J. Albert Locke. The original is in the possession of the Paulist Fathers in New York City. The present engraving is by John Andrew & Son, Boston.



PREFACE.

The materials for this sketch have been drawn almost entirely from the "Life of Father Hecker," written by Father Walter Elliott. Father Elliott has been for many years a member of the Paulist community, and had the privilege of intimate friendship with Father Hecker. He had access to Father Hecker's journal — the chief source of our information concerning his thoughts and feelings during youth — and to letters written by Father Hecker to his family and friends. There is no dispute about Father Hecker's character or about his acts. The controversy over "Americanism" is the clash between contrary opinions concerning the orthodoxy, and also the probable effect, of certain ideas which bear, at least outwardly, a close resemblance to those held by Father Hecker. The chapter on "Americanism" is a simple record of facts with which the public is familiar.

Nobody who feels an interest in the

religious and spiritual condition of this country can fail to take hope and courage from even a little knowledge of Father Hecker's heart and soul.

H. D. S., JR.

NEW YORK, October, 1900.

CHRONOLOGY.

1819

December 18. Isaac Thomas Hecker was born in New York City.

1830

Began to work in his brother's bakery.

1834

Made the acquaintance of Orestes A. Brownson

1843

January. Went to Brook Farm and stayed till July.

July 11. Went to Fruitlands.

July 25. Left Fruitlands.

August. Returned to New York.

1844

April. Went to Concord, Massachusetts, to study, and stayed till June.

August 1. Was baptised into the Roman Catholic Church by Bishop (Cardinal) McCloskey.

1845

Made the acquaintance of the Redemptorist Fathers in New York City.

July. Sailed for Belgium to begin his novitiate in that order at St. Trond.

August 31. Began his novitiate.

1846

October 15. Became a member of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer.

October 16. Went to Wittem, in Holland, to study.

1848

September. Was sent to Clapham, London.

1849

October 23. Was ordained priest by Bishop (Cardinal) Wiseman in London.

1851

March 19. Got back to New York.

1852-1857

Life as Redemptorist in America.

Wrote *Questions of the Soul* and *Aspirations of Nature*.

1857

Plan for founding an English-speaking Redemptorist house.

August 26. Arrived in Rome on his errand to the General of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer.

August 29. Expelled from that Order.

December 22. Had his first audience with Pius IX.

1858

March 6. Decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars releasing Hecker and his brethren from their Order.

May. Returned to New York.

July 7. Paulist Programme of Rule approved by Archbishop Hughes.

1859

June 19. The corner-stone of the first Paulist house was laid.

November 24. The house was completed.

1865

April. Founding of *The Catholic World*.

1866

Founding of The Catholic Publication Society.

1869

November 26. Arrived in Rome to attend the Council of the Vatican.

1870

June. Returned to New York.
Founding of *The Young Catholic*.

1871

Lost his health.

1872

Went to the South for his health.

1873-1875

Travelled abroad.

1875

February. Published *An Exposition of the Church in View of Recent Difficulties and Controversies and the Present Needs of the Age*.*October.* Returned to New York.

1887

Published *The Church and the Age*.

1888

February 14. His brother George died.

December 22. Isaac Thomas Hecker died
in New York City.



FATHER HECKER



FATHER HECKER.

I.

ISAAC THOMAS HECKER was born in a house on Christie Street, in the city of New York, on December 18, 1819. He was the youngest child of John Hecker and Caroline Sophia Susanna Henrietta Freund. John Hecker, whose father was a brewer, was born in Wetzlar, Prussia, and emigrated to this country in 1800. His wife, who was fourteen years younger than he, was born in Elberfeld, Prussia, in 1796, the year before her parents emigrated. Her father, Engel Freund, was a clock-maker. John Hecker was a machinist and a brass-founder by occupation. During his early married life he enjoyed a fair degree of material prosperity. Both families had belonged to the Lutheran sect, but Mrs. Hecker became a Methodist. She was a woman of strong character, devout nature, and quick

sympathies. Father Hecker derived from her his marked individuality, and he was bound to her by the deepest affection. After he was grown up, he wrote to her: "Mother, I cannot express the depth of gratitude I feel toward you for the tender care and loving discipline with which you brought me up to manhood. Without it, oh, what might I not have been! The good that I have, under God, I am conscious that I am greatly indebted to thee for. At times I feel that it is thou acting in me, and that there is nothing that can ever separate us. A bond which is as eternal as our immortality, our life, binds us together, and cannot be broken."

When a little boy, the family means diminished, and he was obliged to leave school and go to work to earn his living. He began in the office of a Methodist newspaper, *Zion's Herald*. Afterward he worked in his father's brass foundry; and at eleven he pushed a baker's cart

for his two elder brothers, who had a bakery in Rutgers Street, near Cherry.

From the age of twelve to seventeen Isaac continued to work in the bakery, and then he began to show that eager interest in the life of the community which marked him so strongly in later years. This interest took him into politics. There was at that time a radical democratic party called the Workingman's Party, which Hecker and his brothers joined. Isaac used to harangue in the streets on the subject of proper currency when he was no older than thirteen.

About this time he came under the influence of one of the leaders of the Workingman's Party, Dr. Orestes A. Brownson. Brownson was a man of most marked individuality and of varied experience. He had strong human sympathies and a keen, logical intelligence. Born and bred in Vermont, as a young man he had joined the Presbyterian

Church. After a few years he quitted that sect, and became a Universalist, going into the ministry; but not long thereafter, under the intellectual influences of Unitarianism, he shifted to the Unitarian ministry. He was a philanthropist and a metaphysician. He took up certain opinions similar to those of Robert Owen, Saint-Simon and Fourier, and forsook the ministry for the career of a stump speaker and man of letters. He was much interested in politics; and at this time preached a species of socialism of a somewhat material character, urging all men to labour for the good things of this life, on the ground, among others, that there was nothing beyond. At this time, too, he seems to have lost all faith in the Christian religion as a divine revelation, and yet to have clung the closer to it as a social system. Direct, ardent, eloquent, he was a very effective speaker. Brownson was nearly twice as old as Hecker,

and acquired a strong influence over him, which became reciprocal as years went on. Brownson himself did not join the Roman Catholic Church until a few months after Hecker.

Hecker had been brought up by his mother in the Methodist faith, and had been taught to consider Christ as the Sacrifice demanded by Divine Justice. As Hecker felt no consciousness of sin in himself, he had never been strongly drawn to this conception. He had no real attachment to Christian doctrines. He became a half sceptic upon religious matters.

Familiarity with Brownson increased Hecker's natural interest in philosophy. He gave himself to various metaphysical speculations, especially to the metaphysical aspect of religion. There is a story that Hecker was found one day at the dough-trough with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* fastened open on the wall in front of him. He also read

Fichte and Hegel, and at the same time took a deep interest in the exposition of religious doctrine. He would walk three miles of a Sunday morning to hear the Rev. Orville Dewey. Little by little his mind began to desert the matters of daily life, and to habituate itself to a life half of thought, half of the imagination, wholly perhaps of the spirit.

Not until he was twenty-three did Hecker realise that he must break away from the bake-shop, and lead a life outside the path of ordinary men. As a young lad, he had felt impulses out of the common. At night sometimes he would run out of the shop and wander along the wharves of the East River, speculating, thinking to himself, "What does God desire of me?" Before he was old enough to vote, he had lost all confidence in social regeneration by political parties and political agitation. As he grew older, he became inwardly troubled. He deemed the whole scheme

of the ordinary business of money-making wrong. "The heathenish selfishness of business competition started me away from the world." He felt that he must break away from the city. So he went to Chelsea, near Boston, in Massachusetts, to see Brownson and get advice, comfort, and leisure to reflect. From there at Christmas time in 1842, he wrote home to his brothers that he found it impossible for him to continue to live with them and be a baker, that there was something deeper than himself, beyond his control, which urged him on, and that there was nothing for him to do but to follow the new life and light which were opening before him. The influences at work upon him, he describes in his diary : "How can I doubt these things? Say what may be said, still they have to me a reality, a practical good, bearing on my life. They are impressive instructors, whose teachings are given in such a real manner that they influence me

whether I would or not. . . . If I should not follow them, I am altogether to blame. I can have no such adviser upon earth. None could impress me so strongly, with such peculiar effect and at the precise time most needed. Where my natural strength is not enough, I find there comes foreign aid to my assistance. Is the Lord instructing me for anything? I had, six months ago, three or more dreams which had a very great effect upon my character. They changed it." At this time he had fits of nervous depression. His family thought that he suffered from some physical ill, that his body unknown to him was asserting itself. They thought that he should have more outdoor occupation, and that he had better marry, and make a home for himself; but Isaac knew better. He felt inwardly conscious that the centre of all life for him was religion, and that the cause of all his inward trouble was desire for communion with God.

Under date of January 10, 1843, his diary reads : " Could I but reveal myself unto myself ! What shall I say ? Is life dear to me ? No. Are my friends dear to me ? I could suffer and die for them, if need were, but yet I have none of the old attachment for them. I would clasp all to my heart, love all for their humanity, but not as relatives or individuals. . . . Lord, if I am to be anything, I am, of all, most unfit for the task. What shall I do ? Whom shall I cry to but Him who has given me life, and planted this spirit in me ? Unto Thee, then, do I cry from the depths of my soul for light to suffer. If there is anything for me to do, why this darkness all around me ? I ask not to be happy, . . . O Lord ! Open my eyes to see the path Thou wouldst have me walk in."

" *January 11.*—True life is one continuous prayer, one unceasing aspiration after the holy. I have no conception of a life insensible to that which is above

itself. . . . I would not take it on myself to say I have been 'born again,' but I know that I have passed from death to life. Things below have no hold upon me further than as they lead to things above. . . . Temptations still beset me,—not sensual, but of a kind which seek to make me untrue to myself. If I am not on my guard, I become cold. May I always be humble, meek, prayerful, open to all men! Light, love, and life, God is always giving; but we turn our backs, and will not receive."

There, in Chelsea, Brownson and he used to discuss Victor Cousin, Pierre Leroux, and Gioberti. Their discussions would lead them on, each opening his mind and heart to the other, talking of the deepest problems of life and religion, until unconsciously each guided the other on the path toward the Catholic Church. Hecker was manifestly restless and ill at ease; and Brownson, no doubt thinking that discontent with society

was part of his ailment, suggested that he should go to Brook Farm. Thither Hecker went in January, 1843.

II.

THE community of Brook Farm, as everybody knows, grew out of the nobler social discontent that affected the more serious people of Eastern Massachusetts nearly sixty years ago. Most of its members were Unitarians, men and women living under the influence of Channing and Emerson. These people sought to establish a society resting on a foundation free from any social wrong, wherein they should be able to follow in conduct the practice of Christ, and at the same time help one another share the pleasures and refinements of the mind. In this community, at the time Hecker went there, were George Ripley, George William Curtis, and others up to the number of some seventy. Emerson, Alcott, Brownson, and Margaret Fuller were sometimes visitors. If a member could not afford to pay the cost of his living, some four or five dollars a week,

he would work for more hours, or in some way make up his contribution to the prescribed level. Hecker used to bake bread. Mr. Curtis has written this description of him from memory: "He was a youth of twenty-three, of German aspect; and I think his face was somewhat seamed with small-pox. But his sweet and candid expression, his gentle and affectionate manner, were very winning. He had an air of singular refinement and self-reliance, combined with a half-eager inquisitiveness, and upon becoming acquainted with him, I told him that he was Ernest the Seeker, which was the title of a story of mental unrest which William Henry Channing was then publishing in the *Dial*. . . . Among the many interesting figures at Brook Farm I recall none more sincerely absorbed than Isaac Hecker in serious questions. The merely æsthetic aspects of its life, its gayety and social pleasures, he regarded good-naturedly, with the

air of a spectator who tolerated rather than needed or enjoyed them. There was nothing ascetic or severe in him, but I have often thought since that his feeling was probably what he might have afterward described as a consciousness that he must be about his Father's business. . . . He was a general favourite at Brook Farm, always equable and playful, wholly simple and frank in manner. He talked readily and easily, but not controversially. His smile was singularly attractive and sympathetic, and the earnestness of which I have spoken gave him an unconscious personal dignity. His temperament was sanguine. The whole air of the youth was that of goodness. I do not think that the impression made by him forecast his career, or, in any degree, the leadership which he afterward held in his Church. But everybody who knew him at that time must recall his charming amiability. . . . For a generation we

lived in the same city, yet we never met. But I do not lose the bright recollection of Ernest the Seeker, nor forget the frank, ardent, generous, manly youth, Isaac Hecker."

The interest in his life at Brook Farm, nevertheless, lies in the development and growth of his religious nature, and not in the education he received from intercourse with members of that community. On February 22, 1843, he writes to his father and mother: "It is as impossible for me to give you an explanation of that which has led me of late as it would be for a stranger. All before me is dark, even as that is which leads me now and has led me before. One sentiment I have which I feel I cannot impart to you. It is that I am controlled. Formerly I could act from intention; but now I have no future to design, nothing in prospect, and my present action is from a present cause, not from any past. Hence it is that, while my action may

appear to others as designed, to me it is unlooked for and unaccountable. I do not expect that others can feel this as I do. I am tossed about in a sea without a rudder. What drives me onward, and where I shall be driven, is to me unknown. My past life seems to me like that of another person, and my present is like a dream. . . . All appears to me as a seeming, not a reality. Nothing touches that life in me which is seeking that which I know not."

To his dear brother George he writes on March 6: "What was the reason of my going or what made me go? The reason I am not able to tell. But what I felt was a dark irresistible influence upon me that led me away from home. What it was I know not. What keeps me here I cannot tell. It is only when I struggle against it that a spell comes over me." On May 12: "Here I am, living in the present, without a why or a wherefore, trusting that something will

shape my course intelligibly. I am completely without object ; and, when occasionally I emerge — if I may so speak — into actual life, I feel that I have dissipated time. A sense of guilt accompanies that of pleasure ; and I return inwardly into a deeper, intenser life, breaking those tender roots which held me fast for a short period to the outward. In study only do I enter with wholeness. Nothing else appears to take hold of my life. . . . Perhaps I may return and enter into business with more perseverance and industry than before ; perhaps I may stay here ; it may be that I shall be led elsewhere. But there is no utility in speculating on the future. If we lived as we should, we would feel that we lived in the presence of God, without past or future, having a full consciousness of existence, living the ‘eternal life.’ . . . George, do not get too engrossed with outward business. Rather neglect a part of it for

that which is immortal in its life, incomparable in its fulness. It is a deep important truth, 'Seek first the kingdom of God, and then all things will be added.' In having nothing, we have all."

On May 16 : . . . "At present I wish to live a true life, desiring nothing external, seeing that things external cannot procure those things for and in which I live. I do not renounce things, but feel no inclination for them. All is indifferent to me,—poverty or riches, life or death. I am loosed."

At this time he began somewhat to look toward the Catholic Church. He attended service on Easter Sunday, and the next day, April 17, wrote in his diary : —

"There may be objections to having paintings and sculptures in churches ; but I confess I never enter a place where there is either but I feel an awe, an invisible influence which strikes me

mute. I would sit in silence, covering my head. A sanctified atmosphere seems to fill the place and to penetrate my soul when I enter. . . . A loud word, a heavy footstep, makes me shudder, as if an infidel were desecrating the place. I stand speechless in a magical atmosphere that wraps my whole being, scarcely daring to lift my eyes. A perfect stillness comes over my soul. It seems to be soaring on the bosom of clouds.

“*April 20.*—My soul is disquieted, my heart aches. . . . Tears flow from my eyes involuntarily. My soul is grieved—for what? Yesterday, as I was praying, the thought flashed across my mind, Where is God? Is He not here? Why prayest thou as if He were at a great distance from thee? Think of it. Where canst thou place Him? . . . Is He not here? Is His presence not nearest of all to thee? Oh, think of it! God is here.

“*April 24.*—The Catholic Church

alone seems to satisfy my wants, my faith, life, soul. . . . I may be labouring under a delusion, yet my soul is Catholic; and that faith responds to my soul in its religious aspirations and its longings. I have not wished to make myself Catholic, but that answers on all sides to the wants of my soul. It is so rich, so full. One is in harmony all over,—in unison with Heaven, with the present, living in the natural body, and the past, who have changed. There is a solidarity between them through the Church. I do not feel controversial. My soul is filled.

“*May 16.*—Life appears to be a perpetual struggle between the heavenly and the worldly. . . . I have faith that there are spiritual laws beneath all this outward framework of sight and sense, which will, if rightly believed in and trusted, lead to the goal of eternal life, harmony of being and union with God. So I accept my being led here. Am

I superstitious or egoistic in believing this? . . . Oh, were our wishes in harmony with Heaven, how changed would be the scenes of our life! . . . This accordance would be music which only the angels now hear,—too delicate for beings such as we are at present.

[May 31 (?).]—“About ten months ago—perhaps only seven or eight—I saw (I cannot say I dreamed,—it was quite different from dreaming,—I was seated on the side of my bed) a beautiful, angelic being, and myself standing alongside of her, feeling a most heavenly pure joy. It was as if our bodies were luminous and gave forth a moonlike light, which sprung from the joy we experienced. I felt as if we had always lived together, and that our motions, actions, feelings, and thoughts came from one centre. When I looked towards her, I saw no bold outline of form, but an angelic something I cannot describe, though in angelic shape and image. It

was this picture that has left such an indelible impression on my mind. For some time afterward I continued to feel the same influence, and do now so often that the actual around me has lost its hold. In my state previous to this vision, I should have been married ere this ; for there are those I have since seen who could have met the demands of my mind. But now this vision continually hovers over me, and prevents me by its beauty from accepting any one else ; for I am charmed by its influence, and conscious that, should I accept any other, I should lose the life which would be the only one wherein I could say, I live.

“*June 26.*—Solomon said, after he had tasted all the joys of the world, ‘Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.’ I, who have scarcely tasted any of the pleasures of the world, would say with Solomon, ‘All is vanity!’ I see nothing in which I can work. All are vanities, shadows : beneath all there is noth-

ing. Great God ! What is all this for ? Why torment and pain me so ? Why is all this action a profanity to me ? And even holiness, what is it ? . . . Oh, why is it that the noblest actions of humanity speak not to my soul ? . . . I would joyfully be silent, obscure, dead to all the world, if this alone which is in me had life. I ask not for name, riches, external conditions of delight or splendour. No, the meanest of all would be heaven to me, if this inward impulse had action, lived itself out. But no, I am imprisoned in spirit. What imprisons ? ”

III.

HECKER did not find at Brook Farm that which he was seeking. On July 11, 1843, he left, and went to Fruitlands, a farm near the village of Harvard, in Worcester County, Massachusetts. There Mr. Amos Bronson Alcott, with his wife and children, Mr. Charles Lane, and a few others had established, or rather had attempted to establish, a "Family," which should bear to Brook Farm somewhat the relation which Brook Farm bore to an ordinary community. His diary and his letters are, as usual, our guide to his doings and his feelings.

"*Fruitlands, July 12.*—Last evening I arrived here. After tea I went out in the fields, and raked hay for an hour in company with the persons here. We returned, and had a conversation on Clothing. Some very fine things were said by Mr. Alcott and Mr. Lane. . . .

“*July 17.*—I cannot understand what it is that leads me or what I am after.” . . . He began to doubt whether Alcott and Lane could give him what he sought. “Do I not feel that I have something to receive here, to add to, to increase my highest life, which I have never felt anywhere else? Is this sufficient to keep me here? If I can prophesy, I must say no. I feel that it will not fill my capacity. O God, strengthen my resolution. Let me not waver. . . . But I am sinful. Oh, forgive my sins! What shall I do, O Lord, that they may be blotted out? Lord, could I only blot them from my memory, nothing would be too great or too much.” Feeling that he could not stay at Fruitlands, his thoughts turned to the home he loved, wondering if it might be that the spirit was directing him thither.

“*July 18.*—I have thought of my family this afternoon, and the happiness

and love with which I might return to them. To leave them, to give up the thought of living with them again,—can I entertain that idea? Still, I cannot conceive how I can engage in business, share the practices, and indulge myself with the food and garmenture of our home and city. To return home, were it possible for me, would most probably not only stop my progress, but put me back. It is useless for me to speculate upon my future. Put dependence on the spirit which leads me, be faithful to it : work, and leave results to God. If the question should be asked me whether I would give up my kindred and business and follow out this spirit-life or return and enjoy them both, I could not hesitate a moment ; for they would not compare,—there would be no room for choice. What I do, I must do, for it is not I that do it, it is the spirit. What that spirit may be is a question I cannot answer. What it

leads me to do will be the only evidence of its character. I feel as impersonal as a stranger to it. I ask, Who are you? Where are you going to take me? Why me? Why not some one else? I stand amazed, astonished to see myself. Alas! I cry, who am I, and what does this mean? and I am lost in wonder. . . . My relations with my family are very critical at this period,—more so than they have ever been. It is the crisis of the state we have been in for this past year. If God gives me strength to be true to the spirit, it is very doubtful how far those at home will be willing to second it. I have written them a letter, asking for their own aims and views of life; and I am anxious for their answer. The question of returning is not a wilful one with me, for it is the spirit which guides me. If it can live there, I go back. If not, I am governed, and must follow where it leads, wherever that may be.”

In that letter he says: “There are all

the natural ties why we should not be separated, and no reasons why we should, unless there exists such a wide difference in the aims we seek to realise that it would be injurious or impossible for us to live in family, in unity, in love. I do not believe this difference exists, but, if it does, and we are conscious of being led by a higher spirit than our own, we should and would sacrifice all that hinders us from the divine calling. That demands implicit, uncompromising obedience. It speaks in the tone of high authority. . . . That which offends it must be got rid of at all costs, be it wife, parents, children, brothers, sisters, or our own eye or hand. I do not contemplate a sacrifice of either of these. Still, it is well to consider whether, if such a demand should be made of us, we are in such a state of mind that we would be willing to give one or all up if they should stand in the way of our progress toward God. . . .

“*July 23.*—I will go home, be true to the spirit with the help of God, and wait for further light and strength. . . . I feel that I cannot live at this place as I would. This is not the place for my soul. My life is not theirs. They have been the means of giving me much light on myself, but I feel I would live and progress more in a different atmosphere.”

On July 25 Hecker departed from Fruitlands. He made a short visit at Brook Farm on his way back to New York. His journal there reads:—

“*Brook Farm, July 31.*—My experience is different now from what it has been. It is much fuller: every fibre of my being seems teeming with sensitive life. I am in another atmosphere of sentiment and thought. . . . There is not that sense of heaviness, dulness, fleshliness in me. I experience no natural desires, no impure thoughts, nor wanderings of fancy. Still, I feel more in-

tensely, and am filled to overflowing with love and with desire for union. . . .

“*August 2.*—All our thoughts and emotions are caused by some agent acting on us. This is true of all the senses and the spiritual faculties. Hence we should by all possible means purify and refine our organism, so that we may hear the most delicate, the sweetest, the stillest sounds and murmurings of the angels who are about us. How much fuller and richer would be our life if we were more acutely sensitive and finely textured! How many exquisite delights nature yields which we are not yet aware of! What a world surrounds us of which none but holy men, prophets, and poets have had a glimpse!”

In August Hecker was back in New York. He took up his share of the work with his brothers in their bakery. He continued to live after an ascetic standard. He practised the simplest diet—grains, fruits, and nuts—and drank

nothing but water. His discomfort, it might be called distress, with the social order was as strong as ever. He brooded over the inequalities among men. "My diet is all purchased and all produced by hired labour. I suppose that slave labour produces almost all my dress. And I cannot say that I am rightly conditioned until all I eat, drink, and wear is produced by love." He tried in various ways to better the condition of the workmen employed in their business. By agreement with his brothers, who were most sympathetic and generous, he was able to devote some of his time to study and to meditation. He applied himself to Latin and German ; yet all the time his restless soul was seeking for its peace, and his thoughts turned more and more toward leaving secular society and joining a church.

"*September 8.*— At times we are called to rely on Providence, to be imprudent and reckless according to the wisdom of

the world. So I am willing to be thought. Each of us has an individual character to act out, under the inspiration of God ; and this is the highest and noblest we can do. We are forms differing from one another ; and, if we are acting under the inspirations of the Highest, we are doing our uttermost,—more the angels do not. What tends to hinder us from realising the ideal which our vision sees must be denied, be it self, wealth, opinion, or death.”

“*September 24.*—Instead of being on the way of goodness, I am just finding out the wickedness of my nature, its crookedness, its impurity, its darkness. I want deep humility and forgetfulness of self. I am just emerging out of gross darkness and my sight is but dim, so that my iniquities are not wholly plain to my vision. At present I feel as if a week of quiet silence would be the means of opening more deeply the still-flowing fountains of divine life. I would cut off

all relations but that of my soul with the Spirit. All others seem intrusions, worldly, frivolous. The inpouring of the Spirit is checked by so much attention to other than divine things. In the bustle and noisy confusion its voice is unheard. . . .

“*October 18.*—I feel this afternoon a deep want in my soul unsatisfied by my circumstances here, the same as I experienced last winter when I was led from this place. It is at the very depth of my being. Ah, it is deeply stirred! Oh, could I utter the aching void I feel within! Could I know what would fill it! Alas! nothing that can be said—no, nothing—can touch the aching spot.

“*November 3.*—Often I think of my past life and my present with such a strength of emotion that I would cry aloud: ‘O Heaven, help me from my course! This is not the life I would lead; but how shall I change it? O Lord! wilt Thou guide me and lead me,

no matter what pain and distress I may have to pass through, to the true path Thou wouldst have me go in? Oh! I thank Thee for all Thou hast in any way inflicted on me; it has been to me the greatest blessing I could have received. And, O Lord! chasten me more, for I need it. How shall I live, so that I may be the best I can be under any conditions? If those in which I now am are not the best, where shall I go or how shall I change them? Teach me, O Lord! and hear my humble prayer.'

"*November 5.*—How is it and why is it that I feel around me the constant presence of invisible beings who affect my sensibility, and with whom I converse, as it were, in thought and feeling, but not in expression? At times they so move me that I would escape them, if I could, by running away from where I am. I can scarcely keep still. I feel like beating, raving, and grasping what I know not. Ah! it is an unearthly feel-

ing, and painfully afflicts my heart. How to get rid of it I do not know. If I remain quietly where I am, by collecting its scattered rays it burns more deeply into my soul, bringing forth deep sighs, groans, and at times demanding all my energy to repress an unnatural howl. How shall I escape this? By remaining here and trying to bear it or by travelling? To do the latter has often occurred to me of late. By such a cause I was driven from home last winter. What the result will be this time I cannot tell; but, if I did know, I would not wait, as I did then, until it came on me with such power as to be torturing in the extreme. Ah, what nervous strength and energy I feel at such times!

“*Thanksgiving Day.*—And now, O God! if Thou helpest not, I shall be worse than before. Heavenly Father, as the flower depends on the light and the warmth of the sun for its grace and beauty, so, and much more, do I de-

pend on Thee for life and progress. O Lord! from the depths of my heart I would implore Thee to aid me in all good intentions. My heart overflows with its fulness of gratitude for what Thou hast done for me, and I know Thou wilt not shorten Thy hand. Thy beauty, Thy loveliness, O God! is beyond our finite vision, far above our expression. Lord, all I can utter is, Help my weakness.

“*December 6.*—O Lord! my heart is choked from the utterance of its depth of thankfulness. O dear Christ! O sweet Christ! O loving Christ! Oh, more than brother, friend! Oh, more than any other being can be! O Son of God! O Thou who showest forth the pure love of God! O Thou inexpressible Love! Draw me nearer Thee, let me feel more of Thy purity, Thy love! Oh, baptise me with Thy Spirit, and loosen my tongue that I may speak of Thy love to men!”

IV.

HECKER joined the Roman Catholic Church in August, 1844. In the preceding March he had made up his mind to forsake secular life. This purpose brought peace. "I feel the presence of God, wherever I am. I would kneel and praise God in all places. In His presence I walk and feel His breath encompass me. My soul is borne up by His presence and my heart is filled by His influence. How thankful ought we to be! How humble and submissive! Let us lay our heads on the pillow of peace, and die peacefully in the embrace of God."

Having determined that he could not find spiritual satisfaction outside of a church, Hecker set about examining and questioning members of various Protestant sects,—Episcopal, Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist. He felt no inclination toward any of these except

the Episcopal. Brownson had had a varied experience with Protestant sects ; he wrote Hecker that for his part he could not accept Anglicanism. At this time Hecker met the Roman Catholic bishop, John Hughes, a prelate of strong and somewhat rigid views. His exposition of the Catholic faith and discipline, however, seems to have turned Hecker to an earnest consideration of the Anglican Church. Among other Episcopal clergymen he went to see a Mr. William Herbert Norris, the minister at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, to whom he had been attracted by a letter entitled "A Sincere Enquirer," published by the latter. But he came back in disappointment. In the end of April he went to Concord, to study, and after some inquiry found a comfortable lodging at the house of Mrs. Thoreau, mother of Henry Thoreau.

"April 25, 1.30 P.M.—I have just finished my dinner : it was *ein herrliches*

Essen,— unleavened bread (from home), maple sugar, and apples which I purchased this morning. Previous to taking dinner I said my first lesson to Mr. Bradford in Greek and Latin.

“I am extremely well situated, and feel contented in myself, and deeply grateful to you all for your goodness in helping me to pursue the real purpose of my being. All we can do is to be faithful to God and to the work He has given us to do, and, whatever end He may lead us to, to have that central faith that ‘all is for the best.’ There is only one life, and that is life in God; and only one death, and that is separation from Him. . . .

“To you all I send my warmest and purest love.”

He passed his days like an anchorite. Most of the time he saw no one except his teacher, and his landlady who came into his room for a few minutes every day to make his bed. He read, studied,

and gave himself over to meditation. His wants were of the most trifling character. He wrote to his family for some hard bread, some unleavened biscuit, a five-cent loaf, a linen coat. He lived on unleavened bread and figs. His drink was water. More and more his doubts and difficulties passed from him. On May 23 his diary reads: "How fruitful has this year been to me! How strangely mysterious and beautiful! And now my soul foreshadows more the next year than ever it presaged before. My life is beyond my grasp, and bears me on willlessly to its destined haven. Like a rich fountain it overflows on every side. From within flows unceasingly the noiseless tide. . . . It is to me now as if I had just been born, and I live in the Sabbath of creation. Everything that I see I feel called on to give a name: it has a new meaning to me."

On June 7 he received a letter from Brownson saying that he had begun

his preparations to join the Catholic Church, and begging Hecker also to join. The next day Hecker went to Boston to see the Catholic bishop there, and put himself under his instruction. Acting under the bishop's counsel, he resolved to go to Holy Cross College at Worcester, to acquaint himself with practical religious life and a system of intellectual instruction, and then to go to New York and enter the church. He wrote his purposes to his family. His mother preferred that he should join the Episcopal Church, but both she and his brothers fully recognised his perfect sincerity of purpose.

To pass from the influences of Concord to the Catholic Church seems a strange step, but, in fact, his sojourn in Massachusetts during his wandering years had helped him on his path. Introspective and docile to the interior promptings which came or seemed to come to him from above, Hecker had no scien-

tific interest in life. He had no care for the order of nature nor for those physical facts which do not, except in a remote and not easily distinguished way, minister to the soul of man. Emerson, Alcott, the transcendentalists, served his inclinations. They attached fundamental importance to the vague voices which emerge from the depths of a man and speak to him with authority. They gave him a certain philosophy which rested on those inner feelings, and not upon external facts. They taught him that man had some kind of spiritual faculty by which he could learn spiritual truths, in like manner as by intellectual faculties he learned physical truths. Thus his education strengthened his natural bent, and bade him submit to the control of a mysterious, inward authority. When once he had learned that the source of his education was within him, he began to lose his interest in books. He felt it drudgery or worse to study Latin and

Greek, when he might be sitting at the feet of the Spirit within. Before he finally accepted this internal authority as his master, he sought for proof that it was not a mere wayward power, not merely self in disguise, but proceeded from the Divine Spirit. He found external manifestations of its mastery in the world, in the spiritual authority of the Christian religion as embodied in the Roman Catholic Church. The proof of its identity with that spiritual authority was his inward peace. He writes June 13: "I feel very cheerful and at ease since I have consented to join the Catholic Church. Never have I felt the quietness, the immovableness, and the permanent rest that I do now. It is inexpressible. I feel that essential and interior permanence which nothing exterior can disturb." . . .

From Worcester he wrote to his family: "Respecting the purpose which leads me to New York, I have scarcely

a word to say. Quietly, without excitement, I come with an immovable determination to be joined to the Roman Catholic Church. There is a conviction which lies deeper than all thought or speech, which moves me with an irresistible influence to take this step, which arguments cannot reach nor any visible power make to falter. Words are powerless against it and inexpressive of it. To attempt to explain or give to the intellectual mind the reasons why and wherefore would be as impossible as to paint the heavens or to utter the eternal Word, the centre of all existence."

On June 25 Hecker was back in New York, and presented a letter of introduction, which he brought from Bishop Fitzpatrick, of Boston, to Bishop McCloskey, afterward archbishop and cardinal of New York. It was soon arranged that Hecker should be baptised on August 1. The bishop questioned him as to whether he wished to become a priest.

Hecker could not answer. He felt the need of a period of meditation. The bishop intimated that a brotherhood was suited to his state of mind, but for that he would have to go to Europe as in this country all the ministry of the Church was devoted to active work. On August 1 he was baptised by the bishop, and on the following day he went to confession, and received the sacrament.

“*August 2.*—Penance! Joy! Unbounded love! Sweet Jesus, Thy love is infinite! Blessed faith! Sweet love! I possess an internal glory, a glowing flame of love! Let my whole life be one act of penance! O dear Jesus, the Life-giver! . . . O ancient faith, how dear, how good is God in giving us sinners Thee! . . . O blessed, ever blessed, unfathomable, divine faith! O faith of apostles, martyrs, confessors, and saints!” . . .

For a time after this period of exaltation he felt somewhat depressed, but not

for long. On August 20 the entry in his journal says: "I feel my primitive instincts and unvitiated tastes daily becoming more sensible to inspirations from above, from the invisible. The ideal world, the soul world, the kingdom of heaven within, I feel as if I were more a friend and citizen of. O Lord! my heart would break forth in praise of the riches of the life given within! It seems that in this that we enjoy all, know all, and possess all. If we have Thee, O Lord! if Thou hast taken up Thy dwelling in us, we enjoy heaven within and paradise without!"

He felt more and more that business and living in the midst of the workaday world were not for him, that they robbed him of the quiet and contemplation in which he best could live his spiritual life. He wrote to Henry Thoreau to suggest that they make together a pilgrimage to Rome, crossing Europe on foot and begging their way.

Bishop McCloskey gave his approval, but Thoreau's moods and wishes had taken different direction. Hecker joined a class for the study of Latin and Greek ; but, as before, he seems to have taken no pleasure in study. He continued to practice ascetism, only more severely than before. He allowed himself as little time for sleep as possible. He ate nothing but nuts, apples, and bread. He threw himself into the spiritual life, as it is set forth by the traditions of the Catholic Church, with even more than his accustomed fervour.

“*December 18.*—Dreams of the future ! Exalted visions ! Beautiful, unspeakable hopes ! Deep, inarticulate longings that fill the conscious soul ! Ah ! so sweet, so harmonious, so delightful, like an angel, like the bride of the pure and bright soul adorned for the nuptials, do I see the future beckoning me with a clear, transparent smile onward to her presence !”

Nevertheless, his times of rapture were interrupted by fits of penitential remorse. "I am in want of greater love for those around me; I perform my spiritual duties too negligently; too little of my time is devoted to spiritual exercises. I feel all over sick with sin. Here is my difficulty, O Lord, and do Thou direct me. I am always in doubt, when I do not think of Thee alone, that I am sinning and that my time is mispent."

He increased his asceticism until in Lent, 1845, he restricted himself to one meal of "nuts, bread, and apples" a day.

V.

BISHOP McCLOSKEY wished Hecker to become a priest ; but Hecker did not hear a divine call to that end. He went to the seminary at Fordham, and talked with the professors. He consulted Bishop Hughes, who advised him to go to St. Sulpice in Paris and to the Propaganda in Rome. But Hecker felt an inward and controlling need for retirement from the world ; and Bishop McCloskey, recognising this need and desiring to help Hecker learn how to satisfy it, bade him read the lives of Saint Ignatius and of Saint Francis Xavier.

Hecker at this time made the acquaintance of a German priest, one of the Redemptorist Fathers who had recently become established in the city. The rector of the house was Father Rumpler, also a German. To that house Hecker went frequently, and there he met two

young Americans who had applied to join the Order. One of these was Clarence A. Walworth, son of the distinguished chancellor of New York, who had been admitted to the bar, and had practised his profession for a short time. The other was James A. McMaster, from Pennsylvania, of Scotch-Irish parentage, a young man of very ardent nature. At the end of July, Hecker was told by Father Rumpler that these two, who had applied to enter the Redemptorist novitiate, had been accepted, and that they would sail for Belgium the next day. No novitiate had yet been established in America. Hecker asked leave to go with them. He was told that he must present himself to the Provincial of the Order, Father de Held, at Baltimore. Hecker went thither at once, travelling all night. Father de Held examined and accepted him, and Hecker took the first train back to New York. His brother George had already packed

his trunk. His passage was paid by his brothers, and that evening he sailed with his two companions on board the *Argo* for London. During the voyage Walworth taught him to say the rosary and other matters of religious practice, for Hecker had had very little regular religious training. They stopped in London a few days, and then took the packet from Folkestone to Antwerp. From there they went on immediately to St. Trond, a little city about thirty-five miles south-east of Antwerp.

The Order of the Most Holy Redeemer had been founded by Saint Alphonsus de Liguori about the middle of the eighteenth century. It contained a number of preachers who travelled about Europe conducting spiritual exercises for a week or a month, preaching penance and the Redeemer's love for sinners. St. Trond was the novitiate of the Belgian province, which included Belgium, Holland, and the convents in America and England.

The convent at St. Trond, situated on a narrow street, was a solid building some three hundred years old, with little cells opening on long corridors. It had a little garden, and was next to a church, where the fathers served. There were twenty novices, ten or twelve fathers, and a number of lay brothers. Most of these were Belgians, Dutch, and Germans. French was the language spoken. The three new-comers donned the Redemptorist habit in September, three weeks after their arrival. Hecker wrote home : "For three days my heart was filled with joy and gladness. I was like one who had been transported to a lovelier, a purer, and a better world." The daily routine was strict. The day began at half-past four in the morning and ended at half-past nine at night. The time was spent in devotional exercises, meditation, recitation, study, and reading. An hour was allowed for exercise out of doors. Silence was imposed,

except for one hour after dinner and one hour after supper. On Thursdays and on some feast days this rigour was relaxed. Fridays were days of absolute silence. The novice-master, as he was called, was Father Othmann. He found the three Americans different from the other novices. They continually put questions to him, asking for reasons. Hecker's mystic philosophy seems to have made him think that Hecker was suffering from delusions, for he deemed it his duty to put Hecker to severe tests of obedience and humiliation; and he treated Hecker at weekly confession with great rigour, causing him much mental pain. Of this treatment, Hecker many years afterward said: "While I was kneeling among the novices, outside Père Othmann's room, waiting to go to confession, I often begged of God that it might be His will that I should die before my turn came; so dreadful an ordeal had confession

become on account of the severity of the novice-master." At other times, too, Father Othmann tried his humility. Once a week the novices were allowed a good long walk—a privilege which Hecker enjoyed very much. Sometimes when they were starting out, Hecker in high spirits, Othmann would say: "Frère Hecker, please remain at home; and, instead of the walk, wash and clean the stairway." Nevertheless, Hecker was comforted by an inward conviction that he was growing in grace. He increased the severity of the discipline by cutting his sleep down to five hours and sometimes to three. This he did in obedience to one of those inward impulses to which he felt strict obedience was due. At length Father Othmann understood the novice, recognised his special spiritual capacities, and fully acknowledged them. The two subsequently became true friends.

McMaster was deemed unfit for a re-

ligious life, and went home. The other two Americans took their vows, and became members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer on October 15, 1846. To this Hecker had been looking forward with the eagerness of a lover.

He felt, as he said, "a special attraction and devotion toward Our Blessed Lord in the Holy Sacrament, and an almost irresistible desire of receiving the blessed Communion of Divine love. This desire, so far from having abated, has greatly increased, so that I have a constant hunger and thirst for Our Lord in the sacrament of His body and blood. If it were possible, I would desire to receive no other food than this ; for it is the only nourishment that I have a real appetite for. I cannot consider it other than the source and substance of my whole spiritual and interior life. The day on which I have been deprived of it I have experienced a debility and want of both material and spiritual life,

like one who is nearly famished. . . . At times, when I would make my visit, I am seized with such a violent love toward the Blessed Sacrament that I am forced to break off immediately, being unable to support the attraction of the Spouse, the Beloved, the Only One of my soul."

On August 26 he wrote to his brother George, who had joined the Catholic Church at the same time with Isaac: "I have now nearly eight weeks until the time of taking the vows. Oh that it were but eight minutes,—nay, eight seconds,—when I shall be permitted, with the favour and grace of God, to consecrate my whole being and life to His sole service! Millions of worlds put on top of one another could not purchase me from my vocation." And just before the ceremony he wrote to his mother: "Dear mother, in half an hour I go to the chapel to consecrate my whole being forever to God and His service. What peace, what happiness, this gives me!

To live alone for His love, and to love all for His love, in His love, and with His love." After the ceremony he wrote to his brother John, telling him to cancel all the business agreements between them. "All this I leave to your judgments; and as for me, dear brothers John and George, in respect to the business, you may regard me as though I had never been connected with it, nor had any title or claim upon it whatever. I am simply your dear brother Isaac, who loves you from the depth of his heart. This love, be assured, will never be diminished by any event. Whatever happens will only give me new motives to love you the more. My conduct is under your inspection, yours especially, dear John, as being the eldest of us three; and I trust your sincere love for me will not let any word or action of mine pass unnoticed which may be the least unpleasant to you. My love, my gratitude, my prayers, to and for you all."

Having taken their vows, Brother Hecker and Brother Walworth went to Wittem, a small town in Holland, some thirty miles east of St. Trond. There, in an old Capuchin monastery, was the house of studies belonging to the Order. Most of the students were Dutch. French was the language spoken, as at St. Trond. Walworth was put in the theological department, and Hecker in the philosophical. Owing to the strict rules, this difference separated the two almost entirely. Walworth pursued his course, and in two years was ordained priest; but Brother Hecker found the greatest difficulty in his studies. His mind seemed to himself and to his teachers heavily stupid. His attention could be fixed only with great pains, and his memory retained nothing. He practised severe asceticism : he fasted, he lessened his sleep, he wore a hair shirt. At the end of the first year, apparently, all capacity to study had left him. He was

then put in charge of the sick as his sole regular occupation. His stupidity seemed to degenerate into folly. At the end of the second year the superior was at a loss to know what to do. He asked Hecker what, in his belief, God meant him to do in the future. Hecker answered that it seemed to him that Providence had led him through different ways of error, and had made him acquainted with various classes of persons in the United States, and with their needs, in order that, when he had learned the truth, God might employ him to bring them into the way of that truth ; that his vocation was to labour for the conversion of his non-Catholic fellow-countrymen ; that, as it was apparent that he could not study, God meant to aid him by His grace ; and that, if he were left to study at those moments in which his mind was free, he should be able to learn enough to become a priest. This plan was followed. Hecker felt

that he had received intimations from the Holy Spirit that he was to convert his countrymen. His mind, however, was wholly lost in abstraction. He was absorbed in mystical thought, and the common facts with which studies were necessarily connected found no point at which they could lay hold of his interest.

“God, at times, seemed to demand of me a frightful and heroic abandonment of my soul to His good pleasure. God alone knows how to exercise the soul in virtue, and the Holy Spirit is its only true master in the spiritual life. Not only did the spirit of God excite and elicit in me voluntary acts of self-abandonment, but often my soul was as if stripped of all support, and placed, as it were, over a dark and unfathomable abyss, and thus I was made to see that my only hope was to give myself up wholly to Him. The words of Job well express this purification of the soul when he says, ‘The

arrows of the Lord are in me, the rage whereof drinketh up my spirit ; and the terrors of the Lord war against me.' . . . Sometimes these pains penetrate into the remotest and most secret chambers of the soul. The faculties are in such an intensive purgation that, from the excessive pain which this subtle and purifying fire causes they are suspended from their ordinary activity, and the soul, incapable of receiving any relief or escaping from its suffering, has nothing left but to resign itself to the will and good pleasure of God. Though enveloped with an unseen but no less real fire, suffering in every part, limb, and fibre from indescribable pains, fixed like one who should be forced to look the sun constantly in the face at mid-day, she is, nevertheless, content, for she has a secret consciousness that God is the cause of all her sufferings, and, not only content,—she would suffer still more for His love."

Hecker said afterward, "The time in my whole life when I felt I had gained the greatest victory by self-exertion was when, after weeks of labour, I was able to recite the Pater Noster in Latin." Hecker's own consciousness that he had been brought under special influences of divine grace from boyhood was so strong that his superior, Père L'Hoir, thought the same, and sent to him all the students who had difficulties of a spiritual nature; and, in spite of his mortification at his inability to study, his inward peace was not disturbed. He writes to his brother John: "As for me, I regret nothing so much as that I have not a thousand lives to sacrifice to His service and love. Yes, I love you all more than I ever did, and I would count nothing as a cost for your present and eternal good. Yet, by the grace of God, I love my Saviour infinitely, infinitely, infinitely more." Also, he writes to his mother: "There have been times when,

considering the wickedness of the world, sensible of its miseries and my own, and at the same time beholding obscurely and, as it were, tasting the things of heaven, I have longed and wished to be separated from the body. But, when coming back to myself and thinking that with the aid of grace I can still increase in God's love, and hence love Him more in consequence for all eternity, I feel willing to love and suffer until the last day, if by this I should acquire but one drop more of Divine love in my heart."

His spiritual experiences at Wittem were of the kind that we read of in the lives of saints. He says: "Sometimes I have felt singularly present and in intimate communion with certain of the saints, such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Bonaventura, Saint Thomas, Saint Peter of Alcantara, our holy father Alphonsus, etc. During this time—and sometimes it is for many days—the life,

the virtues, the spirit with which the saint acted, occupy almost exclusively my mind. I seem to feel their presence much more intimately and really than that of those who are around me. I understand and comprehend them better, and experience a more salutary influence from them than perhaps I would have done, had I lived and been with them in their time. . . . Twice I remember having experienced in this manner the presence of Our Blessed Lord. While this lasted, I felt myself altogether another person. . . . His presence excited in me a greater love and esteem for the Christian virtues than I could have acquired otherwise in years and years."

Although Hecker surrendered himself so completely to this inner mysticism, and held so fixedly his purpose of devotion to the divine will, and though his mind had wandered so far from the path of ordinary minds that his superiors marvelled at his stupidity and his

brethren deemed him a fool, yet the genuine health and sanity of his nature showed itself in unmistakable signs. At St. Trond on July 4 the American novices told their superior that this was their great national holiday, and asked leave to celebrate it. He inquired how they celebrated it. "By shooting off fire-crackers." There were no fire-crackers. Their next suggestion was a grand military parade. That plan overruled, Hecker and Walworth cried out, "Gingerbread!" So they were sent off for a long day's walk, with their pockets full of gingerbread.

At Wittem a bishop from hard by, who paid the house a visit, said that he could read English, but never had heard it spoken, and that he should be obliged to them if they would speak something in English for him. Walworth and Hecker put their heads together, and at once recited "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." After listen-

ing to English prose, the bishop asked to hear an English song ; and the two young men sang “There were three crows sat on a tree,—caw — caw — caw.”

At Wittem, Hecker baked bread for the whole community during almost all his stay. He also carried in the fuel.

In August, 1848, Walworth was ordained priest ; and the two young men were sent to Clapham, London, to a new foundation of the Order. Walworth was sent on into Worcestershire, but Hecker stayed at Clapham. After Hecker had been there a year, he was found to have acquired enough knowledge through his irregular studies to fit him for ordination. He was ordained first sub-deacon, then deacon, and on October 23, 1849, in his thirtieth year, he was ordained priest by Bishop Wiseman. He spent the next year mainly in parochial duties at Clapham.

VI.

IN the beginning of 1851, together with Father Walworth, Hecker was sent back to America by Father Bernard, the new Provincial of the Redemptorist houses in the United States. The United States had lately been made a separate province. The Fathers sailed from Havre on January 27, 1851, in the *Helvetia*, and reached New York, after a bad voyage, on March 19. They went to the convent in Third Street, and on April 6 opened the first mission in St. Joseph's Church, Washington Place.

The brethren of the Most Holy Redeemer bind themselves by the monastic vows. Their chief purpose, as has been said, is to conduct missions,—periods lasting from one week to a month, and devoted to religious instruction and exhortation,—at which the Fathers, as missionaries, urge the congregation of Catholics to mend their lives and to

come back to the life of the spirit. Missions find their equivalent in Protestant churches in revival meetings. The exercises are held by the Fathers in some parish church. It is customary to give moral instruction on the sacraments or commandments in the morning, and short doctrinal instruction and the mission sermon — called the great sermon — at night. Father Hecker felt that he lacked the qualifications of a preacher, and asked that work be given him as chaplain of a prison or of some public institution of charity. But his superior sent him upon the missions, to deliver not the great sermon, but the doctrinal or moral instruction, having first carefully schooled him what to say. To this work Hecker gave himself with ardour. He travelled about the United States and into the British Provinces, going from parish to parish, meeting many priests, gathering knowledge of human needs, and especially of the needs of the

Catholic Church in America, and gradually becoming so proficient that no man, it is said, equalled him as a doctrinal and moral instructor. His manner of speaking is described by them that knew him as frank, clear, lively, and with an element of humour. His tall figure, his pale blue eyes, his ruddy brown hair, presented a very attractive appearance. He could, better than any of the other brothers, depict true sorrow, teach how to make hearty confession, and set forth the worth of virtue and the dignity of the Christian state. In the confessional — of which he said “no school of perfection can equal the self-denial necessary to hear confessions well” — he was most kind and patient.

The little band of Redemptorist missionaries consisted of Fathers Bernard, Hecker, Hewit, and Walworth. Father Bernard was superior for a year or two, then he was recalled to Europe. He was succeeded by Father Alexander,

and he, not long after, by Father Walworth. Subsequently the band was joined by Father Deshon and by Father Baker. For six years Father Hecker laboured in this field, yet he felt that this was not the way in which he could put his natural gifts to their best use in the service of the Divine Spirit. He felt himself a special servant of God for the conversion of the American people. "Such strong and deep impulses, and so vast in their reach, took possession of my soul on my return to the United States in regard to the conversion of the American people that, on manifesting my interior to one of the most spiritually-enlightened and experienced Fathers of the Congregation on the subject to obtain his direction, he bade me not to resist these interior movements, they came from God; and that God would yet employ me in accordance with them." He tells how he first was moved to set his hand to begin his real

vocation : “The blessings of God upon our missions were most evident and most abundant, and my share in them most consoling, as usually the most abandoned sinners fell to my lot. But, holy and important as the exercises of the missions among Catholics are, still this work did not correspond to my interior *attrait* ; and, though exhausted and frequently made ill from excessive fatigue in these duties, yet my ardent and constant desire to do something for my non-Catholic countrymen led me to take up my pen. That took place as follows : One day, alone in my cell, the thought suddenly struck me how great were my privileges and my joy since my becoming a Catholic, and how great were my troubles, my agony of soul, before this event ! Alas ! how many of my former friends and acquaintances, how many of the great body of the American people, were in the same most painful position ! Cannot something be done to lead them

to a knowledge of the truth? Perhaps, if the way that divine Providence had led me to the Church was shown to them, many of them might in this way be led also to see the truth. This thought, and with it the hope of inducing young men to enter into religious orders, produced in a few months from my pen a book entitled *Questions of the Soul.*'' This book endeavours to show how, through the Catholic Church, the deep yearnings of man for a union with something outside of and greater than himself may be satisfied; how the satisfaction of those great yearnings is proof that that Church, by its sacraments, is the chosen means of God to bring man into communion with Himself. Some chapters of the book are occupied by an indirect account of Hecker's own experience: others discuss the inadequacy of Protestantism. He also wrote a second book entitled *Aspirations of Nature*, in which he sets forth the insufficiency of the

unaided reason to satisfy the needs of the intellect, and argues that divine revelation is necessary to supplement reason, and that the Catholic Church truly embodies divine revelation. These two books were written during the years 1852 to 1857.

VII.

IN the spring of 1857 it was proposed to found a new house of the Order either in New York City or in Newark, New Jersey, which should be the headquarters of the American members of the Order, and where the language in common use should be English, to the end that the Order might come into closer contact with the English-speaking citizens of this country. Bishop Bayley, of Newark, and Archbishop Hughes, of New York, had each made application for such a foundation ; but the superiors of the Order both in this country and in Rome misinterpreted the purposes and hopes of the American Fathers, and refused permission. To efface this misunderstanding and to explain more clearly than was possible by letters their purposes in desiring the new foundation, the Fathers decided that one of their number should go to Rome and state

their case to the General (Rector Major) of the Order. They chose Father Hecker. He sailed on August 5, 1857, and arrived at Rome on August 26.

This journey was a turning-point in Father Hecker's life, and was the cause of founding the Paulist community. He was charged with disobedience in going to Rome without the requisite permission. This charge raised a question of canon law. The constitution of the Order contained an article which provided that no member should go to Rome, to lay a matter before the Rector Major, without permission from his superiors, except under certain exceptional circumstances which the member in his conscience deemed to justify the journey. On joining the Order, Father Hecker subscribed to this constitution; he owed it obedience, and obtained certain rights under it. In 1855 a general Chapter of the Order undertook to change this article of the constitution.

It restricted to Provincials the right to go to Rome without permission in exceptional cases, and denied that right to all others unless they should first obtain express permission from the Rector Major. An alteration of the constitution, however, did not become legally operative until it was approved by the Holy See. This proposed change had been submitted to the Holy See, and was held under advisement ; it had not been promulgated nor approved at that time. But there was also another point in Father Hecker's way. The Rector Major, in consequence of a flagrant breach of this rule not in any way connected with these American Fathers, had addressed a circular letter to the American Province, in which, referring to this proposed change in the constitution, he stated : "In the General Chapter of 1855 it was declared that any one would deserve expulsion who should go to Rome without the express permission of the

Rector Major. And I hereby declare any one who shall leave America without permission expelled, *ipso facto*, from the Order." This command obviously restricted a right secured to the members of the Order by the original constitution. Father Hecker and his friends believed that the Rector Major had exceeded his power in issuing such an order. The Provincial, apparently unwilling to take the responsibility of deciding a point of canon law, and not feeling at liberty to disregard the letter of the Rector Major, declined to give Father Hecker the desired permission; nevertheless, he gave him in writing a statement bearing witness that he had been a good Redemptorist, and that up to that time his superiors had been fully satisfied with him. The question of right to take the journey was one of canon law, but no doubt behind it lay a question of policy, as to which there was some feeling, whether

it was better that the American Fathers should act in concert as an English-speaking body with greater independence than theretofore or that the Europeans should keep absolute control of the Order in this country. There is no doubt that Father Hecker believed that he was acting wholly according to his duty and within his rights under the constitution of the Order. He had permission to go from the head of the house in New York ; and he had explained the matter fully to the Provincial. He set upon his errand with a conscience perfectly clear. His brother George paid his travelling expenses. The acceptance of this money was also made a charge against him as a violation of his vow with respect to poverty.

On August 29 the General of the Order, deeming Father Hecker's journey to Rome a violation of his vows of obedience and poverty, after having received him in the midst of his council, without

warning, without giving him an opportunity to speak in self-defence, delivered sentence against him, expelling him from the Order. Father Hecker in utter amazement fell on his knees, and bowed his head. He went out, and prostrated himself before the Blessed Sacrament, returned to the council, and on his knees begged the General to consider his case further. The General refused, saying that his sense of duty would not allow him to act otherwise than as he had done, and added that he did not mean to condemn Father Hecker for any inward sin, but for his external conduct. Father Hecker appealed to the Propaganda, and delivered his credentials — letters from Archbishop Hughes, Bishop Bayley, and others, originally intended for the Rector Major — to Cardinal Barnabo, prefect, and to Archbishop Bedini, secretary of the Propaganda. Among these letters were some from the four American Fathers,

stating that they shared in the responsibility of Father Hecker's journey to Rome, and naming him as their representative in the matters for which he went. Hecker at once won the sympathy and friendship of Cardinal Barnabo and of Archbishop Bedini. Dr. Bernard Smith, professor of dogmatic theology in the College of the Propaganda, and subsequently abbot of St. Paul without-the-walls, Bishop Connolly, of New Brunswick, and Monsignor Kirby, of the Irish College, espoused his cause warmly. Hecker won other friends. He also both made himself known and helped his cause by writing an article in the *Civiltà Cattolica*, a leading Catholic journal, to show that the people of the United States, the freest in the world, were by no means the most difficult to convert, but were ripe for Catholic doctrines. He also converted one Brown, an American artist of some note in Rome. He did

all he could for the success of his cause, but he was sick at heart. "They have driven me out of the home of my heart and love." He writes to his American brethren: "Our affairs are in the hands of God. I hope no one will feel discouraged, nor fear for me. All that is needed to bring the interests of God to a successful issue is grace, grace, grace; and this is obtained by prayer. And if the American Fathers will only pray and get others to pray, and not let any one have the slightest reason to bring a word against them in our present crisis, God will be with us and help us, and Our Lady will take good care of us. So far no step taken in our past need be regretted. If it were to be done again, it would have my consent. The blow given to me I have endeavoured to receive with humility and in view of God. It has not produced any trouble in my soul, nor made me waver in the slightest degree in my

confidence in God or my duty toward Him. Let us not be impatient. God is with us, and will lead us if we confide in Him."

His adversaries were, no doubt, men of position and influence. The General of the Order had his supporters. Nor were they lacking who felt that these young American priests had been somewhat too self-confident and forth-putting in their plan of freeing themselves to some extent, at least, of European control, and in that, instead of yielding meekly to the wishes of their Provincial, they had sent an ambassador, as it were, to Rome, to insist upon their own way. The Roman Court and its followers had not yet recovered from the shock of 1848, and felt a slight tremour at any sign of independence. So there were many who in utmost honesty deemed Father Hecker a standard-bearer of radicalism and rebellion. It could hardly be expected that Italian prelates

and dignitaries should understand or sympathise with eager young missionaries from New York.

The Propaganda seemed favourable to the Americans, but it soon became obvious that Father Hecker's reinstatement would not tend to maintain harmony in the American branch of the Order. It was suggested that the Fathers should petition the Pope for a separate organisation under the rule of Saint Alphonsus, but directly subject to the Holy See, thereby splitting the American branch of the Order in two. It was also suggested that the separate organisation should be subject to the Cisalpine Redemptorists, at that time an independent congregation. There was another plan, the first failing, that the American Fathers be released from their vows with a view to forming a new organisation of their own under the direction of the bishops and of the Holy See. A petition, following these various sugges-

tions in their sequence, was drawn up and signed by the four Fathers remaining in America, — Walworth, Hewit, Deshon, and Baker. This was a novel course of action suggested by the course of circumstances. In the beginning the American Fathers had not the slightest idea of a possible separation from the Order; but the summary expulsion of Father Hecker, and considerations arising during the progress of the appeal, made it apparent that some change would come about. Father Hecker's own views are clear from his letters to his American brethren.

October 5, 1857. “You will remember, and I hope, before this reaches you, will have answered my proposition in my last note, whether or not you would be willing to form an independent band of missionaries to be devoted to the great wants of the country. I have considered and reconsidered, and prayed and prayed; and, in spite of my fears,

this seems to me the direction in which Divine Providence calls us. . . . With all the difficulties, dangers, and struggles that another [community] movement presents before me, I feel more and more convinced that it is this that Divine Providence asks of us. . . . If you are prepared to move in this direction, it would be best, and, indeed, necessary, not only to write to me your assent, but also a memorial to the Propaganda—to Cardinal Barnabo—stating the interests and wants of religion and of the country, and then petition to be permitted to turn your labours in this direction. . . . I endeavour to keep close to God, to keep up my confidence in His protection, and in the aid of Our Blessed Lady. I pray for you all. You cannot forget me in your prayers.”

October 26. “As for my part, I do not see one step ahead, but at the same time I never felt so closely embraced in the arms of Divine Providence.”

November 12. "My present impression is that neither union with the Cisalpine Fathers nor separation as a band of [independent Redemptorist] missionaries in the United States will be approved of here. . . . What appears to me more and more probable is that we shall have to start entirely upon our own basis. This is, perhaps, the best of all, all things considered. . . . Such a movement has, from the beginning, seemed to me the one to which Divine Providence calls us, but I always felt timid as long as any door was left open for us to act in the Congregation. . . . I feel prepared to take this step with you without hesitation and with great confidence. . . . I should have been glad, as soon as my dismissal was given, to have started on in such a movement. But then it was my first duty to see whether this work could not be accomplished by the Congregation [of the Most Holy Redeemer] ; and, besides, I was not sure, as I now am,

of your views being the same as mine. . . . All indicates the will of Divine Providence in our regard, and gives me confidence. . . .

“We should take our present missions as the basis of our unity and activity ; at the same time not be exclusively restricted to them, but leave ourselves at liberty to adapt ourselves to the wants which may present themselves in our country. Were the question presented to me to restrict myself exclusively to missions, in that case I should feel in conscience bound to obtain from holy men a decision on the question whether God had not pointed out another field for me. . . . Taking our missions and our present mode of life as the groundwork, the rest will have to be left to Divine Providence, the character of the country, and our own spirit of faith and good common sense.”

Father Hecker considered the matter most devoutly. He consulted men of re-

pute for wisdom and holiness. He had constant recourse to prayer for divine guidance. He drew up an elaborate statement of his own religious life and experiences and of the condition of religion in America, and submitted it, with the question whether or no there was sufficient evidence of a special vocation from God for him to undertake such a work, to Cardinal Barnabo, Archbishop Bedini, Father Francis, his director while in Rome, a Passionist, Father Gregorio, a Carmelite, and Father Druelle, of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. Hecker chose these men as most spiritually enlightened, and the fittest wisely to counsel him. They all answered the question in the affirmative. Hecker had the support of many of the American hierarchy — Archbishop Hughes of New York, Archbishop Kenrick of Baltimore, Archbishop Purcell of Cincinnati, Bishop Bayley of Newark, Bishop Spalding of Louisville,

Bishop Lynch of Charleston, Bishop Barry of Savannah, Bishop De Goesbriand of Burlington — all of whom sent testimonials.

After examination by the Propaganda the case went to the Pope, who sought the decision of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Cardinal Barnabo advocated Hecker's cause before that tribunal. Father Hecker was granted an interview with the Pope; he assured him that he believed that his Holiness's decision would be God's decision, and that, be it what it might, he would humbly submit to it.

On March 6, 1858, the decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars was given forth. It recited the petition of the American Fathers, setting forth the different suggestions contained in it, and denied the request to continue the Americans in any way as a separate branch of the Order of the Most Holy Redeemer, and continued: "Since, how-

ever, it was represented to his Holiness that the petitioners spare no labour in the prosecution of the holy missions, in the conversion of souls, and in the dissemination of Christian doctrine, and are for this reason commended by many bishops, it seemed more expedient to his Holiness to withdraw them from the said Congregation, that they might apply themselves to the prosecution of the works of the sacred ministry under the direction of the local bishops. Wherefore his Holiness, by the tenor of this decree, and by his apostolic authority, does dispense from their simple vows and from that of permanence in the Congregation the said priests — viz., Clarence Walworth, Augustine Hewit, George Deshon, and Francis Baker, together with the priest Isaac Hecker, who has joined himself to their petition in respect to dispensation from the vows — and declares them to be dispensed and entirely released, so that they no longer belong to the said

Congregation. And his Holiness confidently trusts that, under the direction and jurisdiction of the local bishops, according to the prescription of the sacred Canons, the above-mentioned priests will labour, by work, example, and word, in the vineyard of the Lord, and give themselves with alacrity to the eternal salvation of souls, and promote with all their power the sanctification of their neighbours."

The decree, it will be seen, deals solely with the petition, and makes no reference to Father Hecker's expulsion from the Order; but, as it expressly declares him as well as the others to be entirely released from the vows, so that he thereby ceased to be a member of the Congregation, it is obvious that the decree dealt with him as a present member of the Order, and that the expulsion was treated as ineffectual. Hecker, acting against his own wish, but in deference to the opinion of Cardinal Barnabo, had

not signed the petition. Afterward, learning of the Pope's intended action, he wrote a note, which was submitted to the Pope, stating that, if the other Fathers were released from their vows and his expulsion were set aside, he would be content to accept his dispensation, also.

Hecker felt that this was a most happy issue out of his afflictions. "I look upon this settlement of our difficulties as the work of Divine Providence, and my prayer is that it may make me humble, modest, and renew my desire to consecrate myself wholly to God's designs." He had a second interview with the Pope, who treated him with great kindness. He returned soon after to America, carrying with him a special blessing from the Holy Father for the work of the American Fathers in making a new religious congregation. He bore with him also this letter from Cardinal Barnabo, as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation "De Propaganda Fide" :—

“To each and every one who will read this letter of ours, we declare and testify that the Rev. Isaac Hecker, secular priest, is free from all ecclesiastical censure, and that he is a man most illustrious for his religious zeal and sacerdotal virtues, most active in cultivating the vineyard of the Lord, especially in the United States of North America, and for that reason especially beloved, not only by very many bishops there, but also by the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda.

“We commend him most strongly in the Lord to the American bishops, now that he is leaving Rome for America, and ask that they receive him kindly ; that they allow him to celebrate the most holy sacrifice of the mass ; and that they do him all those good offices of charity which they think worthy a man who is truly religious and a great worker for the salvation of souls.”

VIII.

FATHER HECKER arrived in New York in May, 1858, and the brethren immediately made plans and arrangements for the new organisation. Nothing was determined without the fullest consideration. Father Walworth did not wholly agree with the others, and withdrew, but joined them again in a few years. The others elected Father Hecker their superior, and drew up a Programme of Rule. This was approved by Archbishop Hughes, to whom they submitted it on July 7, 1858. Saint Paul, as apostle to the Gentiles, was chosen as patron; and the name they took was The Missionary Priests of Saint Paul the Apostle. They are familiarly known as the Paulist Fathers. The habit adopted was black, with a narrow linen collar, and was buttoned across the breast, and girded in at the waist. The Programme of Rule adopted an order of

spiritual exercises similar to that observed by the Redemptorists. Instead of vows the members made a perpetual voluntary agreement, affirming that they were fully determined to promote their sanctification by leading a life in all essential respects similar to that led in the religious orders. The observance of obedience and poverty was enjoined upon the members, and also of the daily and periodical exercises of community life. Their labour was to be chiefly to conduct missions, but to do parochial work as well. The archbishop's approval of the Programme of Rule gave the Fathers the canonical status looked to by the decree of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. Subsequently the Holy See granted permission to the archbishop to establish the Paulist Institute in his diocese, with the consent of his suffragans, which consent was obtained, and the Institute canonically established.

For some time the little community had no home ; but plans for establishing a home and parish in New York had already been made, and the site on 59th Street, just west of 9th Avenue, at that time unopened, a spot more in the country than in the city, was selected. Money was raised, the land bought, and on Trinity Sunday, June 19, 1859, the corner-stone of the new building was laid by Archbishop Hughes. The new house and chapel were completed in November, and the work of the Fathers as parish priests began. About this time Father Robert Beverly Tillotson and Father Alfred Young joined them. Father Walworth came back, and this increase in numbers enabled them to prosecute both their missionary and parish work more vigorously.

To one who has not had the privilege of knowing Father Hecker in person, his active, energetic life, his eager interest in doing, his fertility in plans, from the time

of his journey to Rome until his health failed him, are a continual surprise. The contemplative, meditative spirit, absorbed in itself, and in visions and communions known only to itself, which in its time of preparation had seemed so lethargic and dazed, even in the presence of so slight a demand upon its activity as study for the priesthood, suddenly stands up and shakes itself, instinct with life and zeal for active wrestling with the enemies of right. It is hardly human for a man so to begin anew as if his old self had been sloughed off. The seeds of active life, which showed themselves somewhat in his boyish years before he went to Brook Farm, had lain in the rich soil of his ardent nature, germinating and swelling till their appointed time. These two sides of Father Hecker's nature inclined him toward the two main purposes to which he devoted his life — obedience to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and conversion of his

fellows to that obedience by using all the influences of ordinary life as instruments and assistant agencies. With all his confidence in the inward impulses which, according to his experience, come to the honest seeker after spiritual life, he recognised the danger of wayward and vain doctrines; and he had the deepest conviction that the Catholic Church was the representative of God on earth, and that by her teaching every man could judge the truth of his own inward impulses. He always insisted upon "absolute and unswerving loyalty to the authority of the Church, wherever and however expressed, as God's authority upon earth and for all time." Nevertheless, he believed that all men, as children of God, may have direct communion with the Holy Spirit; but that they must make themselves ready for that great blessing by endeavour, by prayers, and by the sacraments. "The Holy Spirit is the inspiration of the

inner life of the regenerate man, and in that life is his Superior and Director. That His guidance may become more and more immediate in an interior life, and the soul's obedience more and more instinctive, is the object of the whole external order of the Church, including the sacramental system. . . . It should ever be kept in view that the practice of the virtues is not only for their own sake and to obtain merit, but mainly in order to remove all obstacles in the way of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and to assist the soul in following His operations with docility. . . . True spiritual direction consists in discovering the obstacles in the way of the Divine guidance, in aiding and encouraging the penitent to remove them, and in teaching how the interior movements of the Holy Spirit may be recognised as well as in stimulating the soul to fidelity and docility to His movements. . . . The whole aim of the science of Christian

perfection is to instruct men how to remove the hindrances in the way of the action of the Holy Spirit, and how to cultivate those virtues which are most favourable to His solicitations and inspirations. Thus the sum of spiritual life consists in observing and yielding to the movements of the Spirit of God in our soul, employing for this purpose all the exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, the practice of virtues, and good works. . . . The radical and adequate remedy for all the evils of our age, and the source of all true progress, consists in increased attention and fidelity to the action of the Holy Spirit in the soul. 'Thou shalt send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.' " . . .

With regard to the contradiction that might seem likely to occur between the authority of the interior directions and that of the Church he says: "The action of the Holy Spirit embodied visibly in

the authority of the Church and the action of the Holy Spirit dwelling invisibly in the soul form one inseparable synthesis ; and he who has not a clear conception of this twofold action of the Holy Spirit is in danger of running into one or the other, and sometimes into both, of these extremes, either of which is destructive of the end of the Church. The Holy Spirit, in the external authority of the Church, acts as the infallible interpreter and criterion of divine revelation. The Holy Spirit in the soul acts as the divine Life-giver and Sanctifier. It is of the highest importance that these two distinct offices of the Holy Spirit should not be confounded. . . . What must one do in order to favour the reception of the Holy Spirit and secure fidelity to His guidance when received ? First, receive the Sacraments, the divinely instituted channels of grace : one will scarcely persevere in living in the state of grace, to say nothing of se-

curing a close union with God, who receives Holy Communion only once or twice a year. Second, practise prayer, above all that highest form of prayer, assisting at Holy Mass ; then mental and vocal prayer, the public offices of the Church, and particular devotions according to one's *attrait*. Third, read spiritual books daily,—the Bible, Lives of the Saints, *Following of Christ*, etc. But in all this bear ever in mind, that the steady impelling force by which one does each of these outward things is the inner and secret prompting of the Holy Ghost, and that perseverance in them is secured by no other aid except the same hidden inspiration. Cherish that above all, therefore, and in every stage of the spiritual life ; be most obedient to it, seeking meantime for good counsel wherever it is likely to be had. . . . The work of the priesthood is to help to guide the Christian people, understanding that God is always guiding them interiorly.

. . . The guide of the soul is the Holy Spirit Himself, and the criterion, or test, of possessing that guide is the Divine authority of the Church. . . . The sacraments, prayer, and holy reading, and hearing sermons and instructions, are the plain external instruments and accompaniments of the visitations of God, and are sufficient landmarks for the journey of the soul, unless it be led in a way altogether extraordinary. And, apart from these external marks, no matter how you watch for God, His visitations are best known by their effects. It is after the cause has been placed, perhaps some considerable time after, that the faith, hope, love, or sorrow, becomes perceptibly increased,—always excepting extraordinary cases. Not to ‘resist the Spirit’ is the first duty. Fidelity to the divine guidance, yielding one’s self up lovingly to the impulses of virtue as they gently claim control of our thoughts,—this is the simple duty.”

These quotations from Father Hecker show his fundamental beliefs. But it was not enough for him to enjoy mystical communion with the Holy Spirit. He must be up and doing, a faithful servant in the service of his Master. At St. Trond he believed that he received intimations from the Holy Spirit that he had been chosen as a special instrument of God to labour at the conversion of this country. His belief grew in depth and power until, during his stay at Rome, it seemed to him that Providence reached out and set his hand to the task. Father Hecker thought that the differences between nations should not be allowed to prevent their union within one church. Rather must the individuality of each nation, wrought out through long centuries not without the will of God, be used as the instrument by which each people shall be brought to God. For Italians the Italian character must be put to use, for Germans

the German character, and for the people of the United States the American character. Here in this country was a people who in secular matters had prospered, who in political matters had adopted the new principles of democracy, and had made their country a place of refuge and a home for the unsuccessful and unfortunate from other lands. Had this prosperity, this trust, and this generosity flourished in the absence of God's blessing? By no means. Under Providence, so Father Hecker believed, these results in secular matters were due to the freedom and independent character of the American people. Here, then, was the quality that should serve to bring this people, for the greater part of Protestant origin and suspicious of alien authority, into the way of truth as he believed it to be. He himself had been born and bred among the strongest Protestant sects. He had been acquainted with persons of

various fortunes and conditions in life. He had wandered through most devious ways, and had all the time felt strong within him the spirit of freedom and independence. Was he not especially fitted to show to his countrymen that not the Protestant Church, but the Catholic Church, was in accord with the principles of true liberty, with the affirmations of the Declaration of Independence, and the inclinations of free men? Hecker was particularly indignant with the doctrines which he deemed especially to mark the Protestant Church, of election and of total depravity ; and he denounced the inconsistency of those doctrines with the belief that all men are born free and equal. With these beliefs and these hopes he girded himself to the task of conversion.

His first means was the community of the Paulist Fathers. He wrote, "The controlling thought of my mind for many years has been that a body of free men

who love God with all their might, and yet know how to cling together, could conquer this modern world of ours." He desired his community to minister to the special needs of the people among whom they lived, and to preach the special virtues necessary to enable them to meet those needs. "The main purpose of each Paulist must be the attainment of personal perfection by the practice of those virtues without which it cannot be secured,—mortification, self-denial, detachment, and the like. By the use of these means the grace of God makes the soul perfect. The perfect soul is one which is guided instinctively by the indwelling Holy Spirit. To attain to this is the end always to be aimed at in the practice of the virtues just named. Second, zeal for souls ; to labour for the conversion of the country to the Catholic faith by apostolic work. Parish work is a part, an integral part, of Paulist work, but not its principal or chief work — and

parish work should be done so as to form a part of the main aim, the conversion of the non-Catholic people of the country. . . . Our vocation is apostolic,—conversion of souls to the faith, of sinners to repentance, giving missions, defence of the Christian religion by conferences, lectures, sermons, the pen, the press, and the like works. . . . He [the Paulist] must do the work of the Church. The work of the Church, as Church, is to render her note of universality more and more conspicuous.” . . . But also “a Paulist is to emphasise individuality; that is, to make individual liberty an essential element in every judgment that touches the life and welfare of the community and that of its members. . . . The individuality of a man cannot be too strong or his liberty too great when he is guided by the Spirit of God.”

IX.

THE Paulist Fathers did regular, faithful parochial work in a poor parish, consisting chiefly of labourers and their families living in the outskirts of the city. They kept up their missions from 1858 to 1865. In that year Father Baker died ; and the little band, becoming too few, were obliged to forego them. Until that time they had held eighty-one missions, travelling all over the United States and into Canada. They preached the special virtues needed by the times,—manliness and intelligence. They gave doctrinal instruction, and they waged continuous war against drunkenness and most severely condemned the liquor saloons.

Father Hecker also delivered lectures far and near upon Catholic doctrines and Protestant doctrines, with the purpose of proselytising. Some of the titles of these lectures were : “The

Church and the Republic," "Luther and the Reformation," "How and Why I became a Catholic," "The State of Religion in the United States." His appearance was very dignified. He had a tall figure, broad back, large head with prominent features, and a long, forked beard. His voice, though it had no graces, carried well. His gestures were simple, but at times very energetic. His usual method was to begin by dwelling upon the American love of liberty and capacity for free government, then to argue that Protestant doctrines were inconsistent therewith, next to explain the position of the Catholic Church, and to try to persuade his audience that the teachings of that Church were in all things appropriate and fit for the freedom-loving American. Father Hecker was very active in lecturing from 1865 to 1872, when health began to fail him.

A third means very dear to his heart — for the conversion of his country-

men, was what he called the *Apostolate of the Press*. He entertained a profound conviction that all the circumstances and modes of modern life are in their nature adaptable as means of grace; and, as among the influences of modern life none is greater than the press, he desired, and felt that his desire was from above, that the press be made the servant of God. Not by the voice only, but by the written word, spread as wide among men as might be, and reiterated as often, should the truth be published. The absorbing interest of the war thwarted for a time Father Hecker's plans; but no sooner was the war over than in April, 1865, he began the publication of *The Catholic World*, a monthly magazine. There were many difficulties in his way. His public was small, priests were busy, educated laymen were scarce. His contributions were few and at first hard to get, so that for a year the magazine was chiefly

filled with articles culled from foreign magazines and books. After that it prospered. It has always had great variety of matter, information concerning thought outside the Church, studies in history, controversial discussions, expositions of Catholic doctrines, literary criticism, fiction, and consideration of social problems. In 1866 he founded The Catholic Publication Society for the purpose of publishing such tracts and books as might tend to convert Protestants and confirm Catholics in their faith ; and in 1870 he started *The Young Catholic*, a periodical edited by Mrs. George V. Hecker, meant to prevent the minds of young Catholics from straying from a consciousness of the truths of their religion during the temptations and distractions of youth.

The burden of maintaining The Catholic Publication Society fell mainly on the Paulist Fathers. The purpose of the society was missionary, and to that end

its publications were always given away or else sold at or below cost. Raising the necessary money was a hard matter ; but at the meeting of the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, in 1866, Father Hecker — whose whole heart was in this work — and Archbishop Spalding, by their vigorous pleading, persuaded the Council to enact a decree that the bishops “establish branches of this Society in their dioceses, . . . [and] shall therefore appoint a yearly collection for their support, to be taken up in all the principal churches, or shall make other provision for the same purpose according to their best judgment.” The Council also, in their Pastoral Letter, earnestly urge the clergy to give their strong support “to the undertaking, which is second to none in importance among the subsidiary aids which the inventions of modern times supply to our ministry for the diffusion of Catholic truth.” Father Hecker was most happy over his suc-

cess ; and his intention was to establish branches everywhere in the United States, delegates from which should meet regularly and control the whole work, thus giving the Catholic Church in America the support of a strong body of laymen. The decree of the Council bears witness to Father Hecker's power over men ; but the needs of the Church in building churches and schools, in providing priests and teachers for the rapidly increasing Catholic population, left the dioceses no money to spare for the Publication Society. Collections of money made were soon spent, and no more came in. Thereupon Mr. George V. Hecker generously paid the cost. Subsequently, finding that he had put much money into the work, he was obliged to turn the society into a publishing business. Father Hecker was greatly grieved at this lost opportunity, but he bore what was for him a bitter disappointment with gentle submission.

One more attempt he made to further the Apostolate of the Press. In 1871 a New York daily paper, a member of the Associated Press, was for sale, and could be bought for \$300,000. Father Hecker jumped at the prospect of a daily newspaper, with its first purpose to further divine truth. He persuaded various rich men to subscribe. Archbishop McCloskey headed the list. More than half the necessary sum was raised, when Hecker fell ill, and the project had to be abandoned. There was no man to take his place. Yet the Apostolate of the Press had spread Father Hecker's fame. In 1869 Pius IX. wrote him an autograph letter, commending the various works in which he and the Paulist Fathers were engaged, especially this work of the press, and bestowing upon them all his blessing.

When the Council of the Vatican was called together, Father Hecker was urged by his friends to go to Rome ; and Bishop

Rosecrans, of Columbus, Ohio, being himself unable to attend the Council, appointed Father Hecker his proxy. He arrived in Rome in November, 1869; but he was not allowed to attend the Council, because there were so many prelates present in person that proxies were not recognised. The archbishop of Baltimore, however, made Hecker his theologian, whereby he obtained the privileges of reading all the documents of the Council, of knowing all that took place in it, and of taking part in the deliberations of the American hierarchy, which met by themselves to consider the interests of the Church in the United States. He abstained from taking part in the controversy concerning the infallibility of the Pope, although he had always believed in the doctrine. He said: "I have always heard the voice of Rome as that of truth itself. . . . All I have to say is that, if the Roman Court prevail [in the deliberations of the Council], it is

the Holy Ghost who prevails through the Roman Court.” And, after the Council was over, he wrote: “The definition of the Vatican Council completes and fixes forever the external authority of the Church against the heresies and errors of the last three centuries. . . . None but the declared enemies of the Church and misdirected Catholics can fail to see in this the directing influence of the Holy Ghost. . . . The definition leaves no longer any doubt in regard to the authority of the Chief of the Church. For my part, I sincerely thank the Jesuits for their influence in bringing it about, even though that were as great as some people would have us believe. . . . This had to be done before the Church could resume her normal course of action. What is that? Why, the divine external authority of the Church completed, fixed beyond all controversy, her attention and that of all her children can now be turned more directly to the

divine and interior authority of the Holy Ghost in the soul. The whole Church, giving her attention to the interior inspirations of the Holy Spirit, will give birth to her renewal, and enable her to reconquer her place and true position in Europe and the whole world. For we must never forget that the immediate means of Christian perfection is the interior direction of the Holy Spirit, while the test of our being directed by the Holy Spirit, and not by our fancies and prejudices, is our filial obedience to the divine external authority of the Church.

“If for three centuries the most influential schools in the Church gave a preponderance in their teaching and spiritual direction to those virtues which are in direct relation to the external authority of the Church, it must be remembered that the heresies of that period all aimed at the destruction of this authority. The character of this teaching, therefore, was a necessity. There was no other way of

preserving the children of the Church from the danger of this infection. If the effect of this teaching made Catholics childlike, less manly and active than others, this was, under the circumstances, inevitable.

“The definition of the Vatican Council, thanks to the Jesuits, now gives us freedom to turn our attention in another direction, and to cultivating other virtues. If one infidel was equal to two Catholics in courage and action in the past, in the future one Catholic, moved by the Holy Spirit, will be equal to half a dozen or a thousand infidels and heretics.”

Father Hecker had an interview with the Pope, and saw Cardinal Barnabo and many old friends, during his stay in Rome. He was full of spiritual confidence, and was sure that he then received special illumination from God on the relation between the inner and the outer action of the Holy Ghost in sancti-

fyng the soul. He wrote to his brothers' family that one day, as he watched representatives of the Catholic Church gathered together from the civilised world, marching in a throng through one of the great *piazzas*, he hardly kept himself from crying out, "Three cheers for Paradise, and one for the United States." He also writes: "I return with new hope and fresher energy for that better future for the Church and humanity which is in store for both in the United States. This is the conviction of all intelligent and hopeful minds in Europe. They look to the other side of the Atlantic, not only with great interest, but to catch the light which will solve the problems of Europe. Our course is surely fraught with the interests, hopes, and happiness of the race. I never felt so much like acquitting myself as a Christian and a man. The convictions which have hitherto directed my course have been deepened, confirmed,

and strengthened by recent experience here; and I return to my country a better Catholic and more an American than ever."

Father Hecker was always turning over in his mind new plans to further what he believed to be the cause of God in this country. One of the earliest notions he had entertained to this end was to use the capacities for devotion and self-sacrifice in women. This idea came to him again forcibly in Rome. One day he said Mass in the catacombs of St. Agnes in the presence of a small company of persons. In that solemn spot, hallowed for him by the prayers and sufferings of martyrs, he prayed with his whole heart. "What did I pray for?" he wrote to his brethren. "For you all, especially for the future. What future? How shall I name it? The association of women, in our country, to aid the work of God through the Holy Church for its conversion. My convic-

tions became fixed, and my determination to begin the enterprise consecrated."

After leaving Rome, he went to various places in Italy; but the spot that drew out his heart was Assisi. "I could have kissed the stones of the streets of the town when I remembered that Saint Francis had trodden these same streets, and the love and heroism which beat in his heart. . . . I said Holy Mass at the tomb of Saint Francis, and in presence of his body this morning—a votive Mass of the Saint. It seems I could linger weeks and weeks around this holy spot. . . . What Saint Francis did for his age one might do for one's own. He touched the chords of feeling and of aspiration in the hearts of the men and women of his time, and organised them for action. Saint Dominic did the same for the intellectual wants of the time. Why not do this for our age? Who shall so touch the springs of men's hearts and reach their minds as

to lead them to the desire of united action, and organise them so as to bring forth great results? There is no doubt that the age wants this."

Father Hecker's deep desire to establish the kingdom of God on earth found America too narrow for its hopes. His passionate confidence in the American people led him to imagine America carrying the gospel back to Europe. "The work that Divine Providence has called us to do in our own country, were its spirit extended through Europe, would be the focus of new light and an element of regeneration. Our country has a providential position in our century in relation to Europe, and our efforts to Catholicise and sanctify it give it an importance, in a religious aspect, of a most interesting and significant character."

Full of beliefs, full of hopes, with all his convictions strengthened, and with an ever-increasing desire to put his

strength into the most enduring work for God and the Church, he went back to his brethren in New York.

X.

FROM 1871 to 1888 the story of Father Hecker is very sad. His health, undermined by the too severe self-denials of his youth, gave way. Headaches, dyspepsia, sleeplessness, tormented him. By the summer of 1872 he was unable to continue at work, and he was sent by his physicians to the South and afterward to Europe on a search for health. He travelled through Europe, made a journey up the Nile, and visited Palestine. At times he was better, and had periods of relief; but, as the years went on, his nervous system failed in its functions, his blood became thin. For four or five years before his death he had frequent attacks of *angina pectoris*. But bodily pain was less sad than the darkness which seemed to come over his spirit. His mind was unaffected, but trouble came upon him, sorrow took the place of gladness, and it seemed to him

as if he sat in the desolation of sin. In 1874 he writes : “ As to my health these last ten days, I cannot say much. My interior trials have been such that it would be impossible that my health should improve under them. As long as they last, I must expect to suffer. I see nothing before me but darkness, and there is nothing within my soul but desolation and bitterness. Cut off from all that formerly interested me, banished as it were from home and country, isolated from everything, the doors of heaven shut, I feel overwhelmed with misery and crushed to atoms. . . . There remains nothing for me but to confide in, to follow, and abandon myself to that Guide who has directed me from the beginning. I read Job, Jeremias, and Thomas à Kempis, and meditate on the sufferings of Our Lord and the character of His death. I recall to mind what I have read on these matters in spiritual writers and the Lives of the Saints. I

reflect how from the very nature of the purification of the soul this darkness, bitterness, and desolation must be ; but not a drop of consolation is distilled into my soul. The only words which come to my lips are, 'My soul is sad unto death' ; and these I repeat and repeat again. At all times, in rising and in going to bed, in company and at my meals, I whisper them to myself, while to others I appear cheerful and join in the talk. . . . Withal, I try to have patience, resignation, endurance, and trust in God, waiting on His guidance and leaving all in His hands. . . . My expectations to return to my former labours are not sanguine. It seems to me sometimes that I am cut off from these to be prepared for a deeper and broader basis for future action. But whether this will be or not, is in the hands of God. Whatever He wills me to do, I must do it. My own will has become null, and all that is left for me to do is to wait on His

good pleasure and His own time. To act or not to act, to suffer or not to suffer, to speak or to keep silence, to return to my former labours or never to return, to live on or die, all have become indifferent to me. I am in God's hands, with no will of my own; for He has taken it, and it is for Him to do with me whatever He pleases. If this be a source of pain to others, none but God knows what it has cost me."

One cannot but conjecture that his melancholy came, at least on its human side, from the weakness and helplessness of the once strong body, from the idleness of the eager mind, and from his impotence in the presence of great purposes. "To be separated from all; to look upon one's past as a dream; to become a stranger to one's self, wandering from city to city, from country to country, ever in a strange land and among strangers; to be attached to nothing; to see no definite future; to

be an enigma to one's self; to find no light in any one to guide me; isolated from all except God,—who will explain what all this means? . . . God alone has been always the whole desire of my heart, and what else can I wish than that His will may be wholly fulfilled in me? Having rooted everything else out of my heart, and cut me off from all things, what other desire can I have than that He who has begun the work should finish it according to His design? It is not important that I should know what that design is: it is enough that I am in His hands, to do with me whatever He pleases. To be and to live in His presence is all. . . . God has given me to see the terrors of the Day of Judgment, and it has tried me with dreadful severity; but it is a wonderfully great privilege. . . . All this suffering, though it has been excruciating, has greatly purified me, and was of the last necessity to me. Oh, how proud I was! How vain

I was ! And these long years of abandonment by God have healed me.”

Between the times when he was overcome by brooding, as it were, not upon divine love, but upon the awfulness of God and upon the mystery of His justice and His punishment, there were periods of serenity ; and in them his brave, eager spirit kept grappling the problem how the Church, God’s visible agent on earth, should bring all the civilised world into her communion and gather together all men under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. “The Holy Spirit is preparing the Church for an increased infusion of Himself in the hearts of the faithful. This increased action of the Holy Spirit will renew the whole face of the earth, in religion and in society. Souls will be inspired by Him to assist in bringing about this end. The question is, how shall such souls co-operate with Him in preparation for this extraordinary outpouring of divine

grace? The law of all extensive and effectual work is that of association. The inspiration and desire and strength to co-operate and associate in facilitating this preparation for the Holy Spirit must come to each soul from the Holy Spirit Himself.

“What will be the nature of this association, and the special character of its work? The end to be had in view will be to set on foot a means of co-operation with the Church in the conquest of the whole world to Christ, the renewal of the Apostolic spirit and life. For unity, activity, and choice of means, reliance should be had upon the bond of charity in the Holy Spirit and upon His inspirations.

“The central truth to actuate the members should be the Kingdom of Heaven within the soul, which should be made the burden of all sermons, explaining how it is to be gained now. Men will be called for who have that

universal synthesis of truth which will solve the problems, eliminate the antagonisms, and meet the great needs of the age ; men who will defend and uphold the Church against the attacks which threaten her destruction, with weapons suitable to the times ; men who will turn all the genuine aspirations of the age,— in science, in socialism, in politics, in spiritism, in religion,— which are now perverted against the Church, into means of her defence and universal triumph.”

In the winter of 1875 he published a pamphlet entitled *An Exposition of the Church in View of Recent Difficulties and Controversies and the Present Needs of the Age*, in which he admitted a weakness and lack of energy of character among Catholic nations, in contrast with the greater virility of Protestant peoples. His theory was that, after the Reformation, the Church, in struggling against Protestantism with its exaggeration of personal independence, of necessity laid

great stress upon the duty of implicit obedience, in order to maintain herself and her divine authority, and that in consequence the Catholic peoples acquired habits of submission, dependence, and also an exaggerated esteem of the passive virtues. That submissiveness had played a worthy part, and had maintained the Church in her authority; but now, at the end of three centuries, changed times demanded changed virtues, action must be put first, self-reliance cultivated, and, as these qualities were more marked in the Anglo-Saxon and Teutonic peoples than among the Latins, the former must be brought to put their strength and vigour to the service of the Church, taking their turn in upholding and strengthening God's authority on earth. The Southern races, with their capacity for understanding the value of organisation, discipline, and the æsthetic aspects of religion, must permit the Northern races to satisfy

their reason and their inclination to an inner life within the Church, even if the consequence should be a slighter observance of external forms. All labour and effort must strive to the end that the power of the Holy Spirit be renewed in each individual soul. This essay, together with others, was published in 1887 under the title *The Church and the Age*, and attracted much attention.

In 1875, at the earnest request of his Paulist brethren, who needed his advice and guidance, he came back to this country, and lived on in feebleness of body, passing his winters in New York, either at the Community or with his brother, and a part of his summers at Lake George. In spite of illness he kept up his interest in the cause of the Church, and insisted upon the need of action. He said to a bishop who was on his way to Rome, "Tell the Holy Father that there are three things which will greatly advance religion: First, to

place the whole Church in a missionary attitude,—make the Propaganda the right arm of the Church. Second, choose the cardinals from the Catholics of all nations, so that they shall be a Senate representing all Christendom. Third, make full use of modern appliances and methods for transacting the business of the Holy See.” And to a young priest just returned from Rome, who desired to go back, saying that “I find no time here to pray,” he answered: “Don’t be such a baby. Look around and see how much work there is to be done here. Is it not better to make some return to God — here in your own country — for what He has done for you rather than to be sucking your thumbs abroad? What kind of piety do you call that?”

On February 14, 1888, his brother George died. “George and I,” he once said, “were united in a way no words can describe. Our union was

something extremely spiritual and divine." Father Elliott says, "Those who attended Father Hecker could not but be convinced from what they saw and heard that God allowed George to visit his brother more than once after his death." His brother John had died before, and he himself was not doomed to carry about his suffering body for long. On December 22 he died.

Father Hecker was a man of profound convictions and strong character, resolute under contradiction and quickly provoked by opposition, but of unbounded patience. In him was united, in a most rare degree, a mystic sensibility such as is told of in lives of saints, with an energy of action to a definite end, such as marks active leaders of men. In contemplation, he was lost in supersensuous mysticism. In deed, he was bold, practical, and greatly ambitious. His detachment from the earth and the bonds of the body was absolute.

The mystics — Jacob Boehme, Saint John of the Cross, Saint Theresa — were his spiritual kin. Yet the tie which bound him to his mother and his brothers was most tenderly loving. In science — the study of a material world — he took no interest, in art and literature but little ; Coventry Patmore was his favourite poet. In such matters he found no occupation for his soul. In a generation less sympathetic, perhaps, than any other with the mysteries of the Spirit, in a country not understanding his Church, he accomplished much. Had he lived at another time, here or elsewhere, he might have achieved more ; but he could not have given a nobler example of loyalty to the highest that he knew. His presence and manner were charming. Well may Archbishop Ireland say, “ We shall always distinguish Isaac Thomas Hecker as the ornament, the flower, of our American priesthood.”

XI.

No account of Father Hecker which ends with his death is complete. His ideas affected a number of prelates in the Catholic Church in this country, and also represented clearly and definitely a certain trend of thought among American Catholics, so that, as events shaped themselves, those ideas of his became the subject of much difference of opinion both here and in Europe. To an outsider this difference of opinion seems a part of the inevitable opposition between those minds which naturally hold fast to the past, clinging to old habits and associations, loving and reverencing those things which are hallowed by the loves and sufferings of men long dead, and those other minds which naturally turn to change, feeling that everything changes, that life means growth, and that many old things must and should in the course of nature slough

off. About this fundamental diversity of character and of opinion clustered various other differences, that of race, that of nationality, that of education. Hence there naturally arose two parties in the Catholic Church, both in this country and in Europe, one pulling forward, the other holding back, which were radically opposed to one another. The biography of Father Hecker was the chance spark that set these opposing views ablaze.

It happened not long after Father Hecker's death that several distinguished prelates—Cardinal Gibbons, Archbishop Ireland, Archbishop Keane, at one time rector of the Catholic University at Washington, Monsignor O'Connell, at one time rector of the American College at Rome, Monsignor O'Gorman, bishop of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Archbishop Kain of St. Louis—began to represent in the public mind, rightly or wrongly, a certain set of ideas

and a certain line of conduct, which were more closely connected with a sympathy with American institutions and with American independence than the public, at least the Protestant public, had expected to find among the high officers of the Catholic Church. For example, Cardinal Gibbons pronounced the opening prayer at the Congress of Religions held at the World's Fair in 1893; and Monsignor Keane read papers there in the presence and company of men representing practically all the Protestant sects and all the various religions of the world. In 1894 Monsignor Keane delivered an address before the International Scientific Congress of Catholics in Brussels, in which he expressed very freely certain ideas very similar to those which Father Hecker had held. In 1891 Father Walter Elliott's *Life of Father Hecker* had been published in New York, with an exceedingly interesting and striking

introduction by Archbishop Ireland. As Father Elliott was one of the Paulist Fathers, this book seemed but a natural and pious duty ; and the ideas expressed in it were so nicely in harmony with the ideas prevalent in this country that it provoked no discussion here. Very largely on account of the reputation of Archbishop Ireland the book attracted attention in France ; and in the summer of 1897 a translation into French was made, which was preceded by certain eulogistic newspaper articles. The translation was not exact, it was compressed, and therefore might give a somewhat different general impression from that given by the English version. M. l'Abbé Klein, a professor in the Catholic Institute in Paris, wrote a preface, in which he expressed his fervent admiration for Father Hecker. The translation itself was anonymous. In this same summer Monsignor O'Connell made an address before the Catholic

Scientific Congress at Fribourg, in which he praised those ideas which were beginning to be known as American ideas. By these and other means the conservative party among the French Catholics was made aware of the sharp differences of opinion between it and this liberal branch of the Church in America, and of the use which the progressive or radical party in the French Church made of those American opinions to gain support for itself. Thereupon M. l'Abbé Maig-nen, a priest of the Congregation of Saint Vincent de Paul, wrote a book entitled *Le Père Hecker est-il un Saint?* and subsequently an English version of it, with certain slight changes, entitled *Father Hecker, is he a Saint?* Cardinal Richard, archbishop of Paris, to whom jurisdiction in the matter properly belonged, declined to give his *imprimatur*. M. l'Abbé Maig-nen had recourse to Father Lepidi, a Dominican monk, master of the Sacred Palace in Rome, who gave

the Vatican *imprimatur*. This unusual proceeding betrayed strong sympathy with the publication. The book represents the views of the conservative, or retrograde, party in the Church, and sets forth very plainly the great differences between its opinions and the so-called American opinions. It contains a running commentary upon Father Elliott's *Life of Hecker*, and perhaps makes unduly prominent and perhaps distorts those ideas with which Maignen particularly finds fault and then replies to those ideas with argument and invective. Maignen felt very strongly and spoke very plainly. These two books, the French translation of Hecker's *Life* and *Le Père Hecker est-il un Saint?* set forth the two sides, and raised a very sharp issue between the two sets of ideas. The controversy spread to Rome. Strong, almost bitter feelings were aroused against the Americans, and were strongly uttered.

His Holiness, Leo XIII., has twice expressed himself upon the line of conduct and the set of ideas which the party of progress in America had adopted or had been supposed by the public to have adopted. The first time was in a letter to Monsignor (now Cardinal) Satolli, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States upon the subject of congresses, commonly called "Parliaments of Religions." His Holiness forbade Catholics to take part in such mixed congresses ; but in his letter he says : "While thus fulfilling a duty of Our apostolic charge in making this communication, We are pleased at the same time, Venerable Brother, to recommend to you the method followed by the Paulists. It is their wise practice to give public conferences for Our dissident brethren, explaining Catholic teaching and refuting the objections that are urged against it."

The second time, the Pope delivered his judgment directly upon the contro-

versy, as it appeared to be, between the ideas attributed to the advanced party in the Church and the conservative ideas of their adversaries. This letter, entitled "Concerning New Opinions, etc.," is dated January 22, 1899 ; but it was not published until February. It is directed to Cardinal Gibbons, and reads in part as follows : "It is known to you, beloved son, that the biography of Isaac Thomas Hecker, especially through the action of those who undertook to translate or interpret it in a foreign language, has excited not a little controversy on account of certain opinions brought forward concerning the way of leading Christian life. . . . The underlying principle of these new opinions is that, in order more easily to attract those who differ from her, the Church should shape her teachings more in accord with the spirit of the age and relax some of her ancient severity and make some concessions to new opinions. Many think that these

concessions should be made, not only in regard to ways of living, but even in regard to doctrines which belong to the deposit of the faith. They contend that it would be opportune, in order to gain those who differ from Us, to omit certain points of her teaching which are of lesser importance, and to tone down the meaning which the Church has always attached to them. It does not need many words, beloved son, to prove the falsity of these ideas if the nature and origin of the doctrine which the Church puts forward are called to mind. The Vatican Council says concerning this point: 'For the doctrine of faith which God has revealed has not been proposed, like a philosophical invention to be perfected by human ingenuity, but has been delivered as a divine deposit to the Spouse of Christ, to be faithfully kept and infallibly declared. Hence that meaning of the sacred dogmas is perpetually to be retained which Our Holy Mother, the

Church, has once declared ; nor is that meaning ever to be departed from under the pretence or pretext of a deeper comprehension of them.' — *Constitutio de Fide Catholica*, Chapter IV.

“We cannot consider as altogether blameless the silence which purposely leads to the omission or neglect of some of the principles of Christian doctrine. . . .

“But, beloved son, in this present matter of which We are speaking there is even a greater danger and a more manifest opposition to Catholic doctrine and discipline in that opinion of the lovers of novelty, according to which they hold such liberty should be allowed in the Church, that her supervision and watchfulness being in some sense lessened, allowance be granted the faithful, each one to follow out more freely the leading of his own mind and the trend of his own proper activity. They are of opinion that such liberty has its counterpart in

the newly given civil freedom which is now the right and the foundation of almost every secular state.

“In the apostolic letters concerning the constitution of states . . . We . . . set forth the difference existing between the Church, which is a divine society, and all other social human organizations which depend simply on free will and choice of men.

“It is alleged that now the Vatican decree concerning the infallible teaching authority of the Roman Pontiff having been proclaimed, that nothing further on that score can give any solicitude, and accordingly, since that has been safeguarded and put beyond question, a wider and freer field both for thought and action lies open to each one. But such reasoning is evidently faulty. . . .

“Coming now to speak of the conclusions which have been deduced from the above opinions, and for them, We readily believe there was no thought of wrong

or guile, yet the things themselves certainly merit some degree of suspicion. First, all external guidance is set aside for those souls who are striving after Christian perfection as being superfluous or, indeed, not useful in any sense — the contention being that the Holy Spirit pours richer and more abundant graces than formerly upon the souls of the faithful, so that without human intervention He teaches and guides them by some hidden instinct of His own. . . .

“To practise virtue, there is absolute need of the assistance of the Holy Spirit; yet We find those who are fond of novelty giving an unwarranted importance to the natural virtues, as though they better responded to the customs and necessities of the times. . . . This over-estimate of natural virtue finds a method of expression in assuming to divide all virtues in active and passive, and it is alleged that, whereas passive virtues found better place in past times, our

age is to be characterised by the active. That such a division and distinction cannot be maintained is patent. . . .

“From this disregard of the evangelical virtues, erroneously styled passive, the step was a short one to a contempt of the religious life which has in some degree taken hold of minds. That such a value is generally held by the upholders of new views We infer from certain statements concerning the vows which religious orders take. They say vows are alien to the spirit of our times, in that they limit the bounds of human liberty, that they are more suitable to weak than to strong minds ; that, so far from making for human perfection and the good of human organisation, they are hurtful to both ; but that this is as false as possible . . . is clear. . . .

“Finally, . . . it is stated that the way and method hitherto in use among Catholics for bringing back those who have fallen away from the Church should be

left and another one chosen, in which matter it will suffice to note that it is not the part of prudence to neglect that which antiquity with long experience has approved and which is also taught by Apostolic authority. . . .

“From the foregoing it is manifest, beloved son, that We are not able to give approval to those views which, in their collective sense, are called by some ‘Americanism.’ ”

Archbishop Ireland, Monsignor Keane, and Monsignor O’Connell have all denied that they had held the doctrines thus designated as “Americanism.” And it is plain that His Holiness has not condemned Father Hecker nor all of his opinions, but rather an extreme and distorted representation of those opinions as they appear in the fearful minds of the conservatives. Good Catholics may still find in Father Hecker’s mysticism a likeness to Saint Theresa, and in his vigorous life a likeness to

Saint Bernard. It has often been that opinions feared by the timid to-day become their stay and strength on the morrow ; so it may be that the Church of the twentieth century will gladly take Father Hecker's opinions as the rough materials out of which to fashion sound doctrines that shall help men to lead better lives.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

The *Life of Father Hecker*, by Father Walter Elliott, is the only biography of the subject of this sketch. Father Elliott was one of Father Hecker's disciples. It was most fitting that it should have fallen to him to write the life of his friend and master. That biography is fair, complete, and full of quotations from Father Hecker's private journal and from his letters to his brothers and friends.

The other books, essays, and articles which are enumerated below add no information about Father Hecker. They concern themselves chiefly with the controversy which arose over that biography.

I. THE LIFE OF FATHER HECKER. By Rev. Walter Elliott, with an Introduction by the Most Rev. John Ireland, D.D., Archbishop of St. Paul. (New York, 1891, 1894 : The Columbus Press.)

II. *The Dublin Review*, vol. iii., July, 1892. "Isaac Hecker." By Dr. William Barry. This article is merely a review of Father Elliott's book.

III. *The Catholic World*, vol. lx., January, 1895. "The Consecrated Mission of the Printed Word." By Margaret E. Jordan. This article deals with the Apostolate of the Press as begun by Father Hecker. It contains no information concerning Father Hecker except what is in the *Life*.

IV. *The Catholic World*, vol. lxvii., June, 1898. "Personal Recollections of Father Hecker." By l'Abbé Dufresne. The substance of this article appeared in the appendix at the end of the *Life*. L'Abbé Dufresne had known Father Hecker in Switzerland.

V. ÉTUDES SUR L'AMÉRICANISME — LE PÈRE HECKER, EST-IL UN SAINT? By Charles Maignen, S.T.D., priest of the Congregation of the Brothers of St. Vin-

cent de Paul. (Rome : International Catholic Library — Desclée, Lefebvre & Co. Paris : Librairie de Victor Retaux. 1898.) This is an examination of Father Elliott's *Life* and a criticism of certain ideas found, or claimed to be found, therein.

VI. FATHER HECKER, IS HE A SAINT? By the same. This is an English version, with very slight differences, of the foregoing book. It has the same publishers in Rome and Paris. In London, Burns & Oates. 1898.

VII. *The Open Court*, vol. xii., November, 1898. "Latin and American in the Roman Catholic Church." By J. Murphy. A slight article.

VIII. ORESTES A. BROWNSON'S EARLY LIFE : FROM 1803-1844. By Henry F. Brownson. Detroit, Michigan, 1898 : H. F. Brownson, Publisher. This volume contains a number of letters from Hecker to Brownson, written in 1843 and 1844.

IX. ORESTES A. BROWNSON'S MIDDLE LIFE : FROM 1845-1855. By Henry F. Brownson. Detroit, Michigan, 1899 : H. F. Brownson, Publisher. This volume is a successor to the last. It contains a few letters from Hecker.

X. *The National Review*, vol. xxxiii., March, 1899. "An American Religious Crusade." By Dr. William Barry. This article touches the controversy concerning "Americanism." Dr. Barry sympathises with the liberal party.

XI. *The Outlook*, vol. lxi., March 11, 1899. "Americanism *versus* Roman Catholicism." By Victor Charbonnel. The writer, a Frenchman, had been a priest, and had espoused the liberal cause with great zeal. Finding himself out of accord with his superiors, he left the priesthood.

XII. *The Nation*, vol. lxviii., March 30, 1899. "'Americanism,' or the Catholic Church in America." By Richard

Norton. The writer, living in Rome, gives a sketch of the controversy from a point of view unfavourable to the conservative party.

XIII. *The Reformed Church Review*, fourth series, vol. iii., June, 1899. "The Pope's Letter on Americanism." Editorial. This is a slight editorial from a liberal.

XIV. *The North American Review*, vol. 170, No. 3, March, 1900. "The End of 'Americanism' in France." By P. L. Péchenard. The writer is the Rector of the Catholic University of Paris, and writes in sympathy with the conservative party.

XV. *The North American Review*, vol. 170, No. 5, May, 1900. "The Genesis of 'Americanism.'" By J. St. Clair Etheridge. The writer is in sympathy with the American party, and contends that the ideas condemned by the Pope were not advocated by that party.



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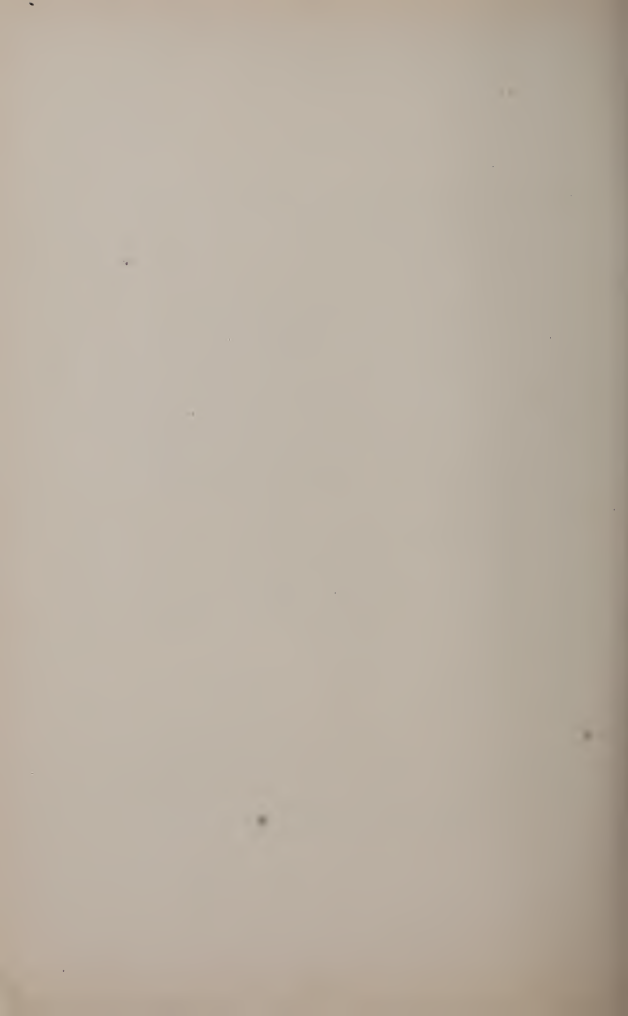
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